University of Alberta

Recognizing Human Differences in Hegel, Heidegger, and Arendt

by

Philip Peter Mueller

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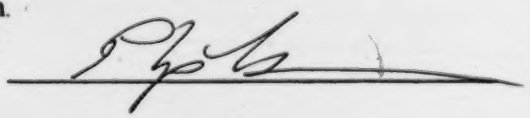

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ABSTRACT

In our present situation, there is a tendency to understand the human self as being an abstract, possessive "atom" who is ontologically and epistemologically isolated from others. The result of this egological, modern self-understanding is the inability to recognize *other* human beings in their defining differences.

In light of this predicament, I ask the following questions: If Hegel and Heidegger offer radical philosophical alternatives to such atomistic individualism, what is the intelligibility of their accounts, and can they adequately recognize other selves in their defining differences? Indeed, what is at stake in any attempt to recognize human differences through transcending philosophical thought? Without impugning the value of philosophical thought, is Hannah Arendt correct in thinking that a non-philosophical practice is also required in order to adequately recognize human differences? What is the relation between such philosophical thought and this non-philosophical practice?

Table of Contents

Introduction 1

Chapter 1: Hegel on the Self and Other 19

- Introduction 19
- A Preliminary Conception 24
- The *Phenomenology of Spirit*: Absolute Self-Making 35
- The Origin of Absolute Self-Making: The Interhuman Encounter 39
  - A. From Consciousness to Self-consciousness: Entering the "native realm of truth" 39
  - B. From Desire to Mutual Recognition 45
  - C. From Mutual Recognition to Abstract Freedom: The Dialectic of Master and Slave 59
- Absolute Thought and the Recognition of the other Human 69

Chapter 2: Heidegger on the Self and Other 79

- Introduction 79
- A Preliminary Conception 81
- Fundamental Ontology: The Project of *Being and Time* 94
  - A. Heidegger's Conception of the *a priori* 97
  - B. The Ontological Difference 102
- Mitsein and Mitdasein as Ontological Characteristics of Dasein: Sections 25-26 108
- The Defensibility of Heidegger's Account 122

Chapter 3: Philosophy, Non-philosophy, and Human Differences 139

- Introduction 139
- Philosophy and Human Differences 140
- Hannah Arendt: Thought, Action, and Human Plurality 152

Bibiliography 164

Introduction

> "...philosophy will not be able to effect an immediate transformation of the present condition of the world. This is not only true of philosophy, but of all merely human thought and endeavor. Only a god can save us. The sole possibility that is left for us is to prepare a sort of readiness, through thinking and poetizing, for the appearance of the god or for the absence of the god in the time of foundering [*Untergang*]; for in the face of the god who is absent, we founder."
>
> --Martin Heidegger[1]

> "The longer one listened to him, the more obvious it became that his inability to speak was closely connected with an inability to *think*, namely to *think from the standpoint of somebody else*. No communication was possible with him, not because he lied but because he was surrounded by the most reliable of all safeguards against *the words and presence of others*, and hence against reality as such."
>
> --Hannah Arendt on Adolph Eichmann[2]

> "Philosophy...will never be able to deny its origin in *thaumazein*, in the wonder at that which is as it is. If philosophers, despite their necessary estrangement from the everyday life of human affairs, were ever to arrive at a true political philosophy they would have to make the plurality of man, out of which arises the whole realm of human affairs--in its grandeur and misery--the object of their *thaumazein*. Biblically speaking, they would have to accept--as they accept in speechless wonder the miracle of the universe, of man and of being--the miracle that God did not create Man, but 'male and female created He them.' They would have to accept in something more than the resignation of human weakness the fact that 'it is not good for man to be alone.'"
>
> --Hannah Arendt[3]

In its origins, philosophical thinking was a response to the wonder and mystery which arises for human beings who recognize and are struck by their finitude. This is what Plato, in reference to the example of Socrates, had called *thaumazein*, an "admiring

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[1]Martin Heidegger in "'Only a God Can Save Us:' *Der Spiegel's* Interview with Martin Heidegger," in *The Heidegger Controversy: A Critical Reader*, ed., by Richard Wolin, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1993), p. 107.

[2]Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem: a Report on the Banality of Evil*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1963), p. 49. Italics, except for that on "an inability to *think*," are mine.

[3]Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics," *Social Research*, v. 57, No. 1, (Spring, 1990), p. 103.

wonder" which is the true *arche* or beginning of philosophical thinking.[4] Finite human being, in recognizing its finitude, seems always to point beyond itself to some transcending intelligibility. It has been the task of philosophy, from Socrates to Heidegger, to take a reflective "step back" from the flux of our finite existence with others, and from this position of solitude to make ourselves aware of the truth of this intelligibility. Philosophy thereby restores an "intelligible pattern" to our finite, contingent, human existence,[5] and in that sense, "redeems" it. Philosophy is not concerned with edification or with transforming the world, but rather, with revealing and so actualizing a universal transcendence which always already *is*, although not expressly "known." Philosophical thinking attempts to understand our human finitude by making us explicitly aware of the transcending, *englobing sense* of our finite existence, telling an englobing and universal story within which human finitude becomes meaningful and can truly be transcended.

The explicit goal of my thesis is to question what is at stake in the attempt to understand and recognize finite human *differences* through transcending philosophical thought. I want to investigate where philosophy might stand with respect to recognizing particular human differences *as* differences. Should philosophy be *required* to understand and recognize particular and finite human differences *as* differences? If so, what is ultimately at stake in such a requirement, both for the recognition of finite human differences *as* differences and the status of philosophy itself?

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[4]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, (San Diego, New York, London: Harcourt Brace & Company, 1977), vol. I,*Thinking*, p. 142.

[5]Dennis J. Schmidt, *The Ubiquity of the Finite: Hegel, Heidegger, and the Entitlements of Philosophy*, (Cambridge, Massachusetts: The MIT Press, 1988), pp. 1-3, p. 17.

In order for such a problem to be intelligible, two related assumptions must be stated at the outset. The first assumption is that while the problem of my thesis is concerned with the limits of the transcending intelligibility offered by philosophy, it is not a problem which is even intelligible as a "problem" within the context of the traditional, Platonic metaphysical framework. In that framework, the relation between human finitude and transcending philosophical thought is understood in terms of a hierarchical and abstract "two-world theory."[6] According to this theory, human finitude is "redeemed" by fleeing from it into an *other-worldly* realm of transcendent forms or universals. The point is to "rise above" the contingent perspectives and actions of human finitude "to a grasp of timeless truth."[7] Moreover, this rise from finitude to timeless universality is thought possible because ontologically, human being is conceived in terms of a universal and atemporal human nature or substance.

> If metaphysical truth is timeless, then man, the animal capable of recognizing this truth, must have a capacity which is itself timeless. This is an implication which traditional metaphysicians could easily accept; for they believed in a human nature which, though subject to accidental historical changes, was essentially permanent.[8]

Ontologically then, what human being essentially is has nothing to do with "accidental historical changes"or particular differences. All particular human differences and historical changes are contingent and inessential when compared with the atemporal universal, and it is this universal which is the proper subject matter of traditional

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[6]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 23.

[7]Emil Fackenheim, *Metaphysics and Historicity*, (Milwaukee: Marquette University Press, 1961), p. 9.

[8]Ibid., p. 12.

metaphysics. Human being can philosophically transcend and escape the finitude and particularity of history and know this timeless universal in thought because essentially, human being is itself such a timeless universal, a permanent, all-comprehending nature. Philosophical knowledge amounts then to ontological self-knowledge, where the being of the human self *is* its capacity to escape the finitude of the world and know timeless metaphysical truth.

On these assumptions, the requirement that philosophy understand and recognize human beings in terms of finite human differences *as differences*, as well as the problem of what is at stake in philosophy's attempt to do so, would not even make sense. For philosophy understands human being essentially in terms of a permanent and universal human nature or *telos*, an understanding which necessarily involves an *escape* from the finite and particular, historically situated differences among actual human beings.

But "what if there is no such thing as a permanent human nature? What if the distinction between permanent human nature and historical change is a false distinction: if man's very being is historical?" This is the Hegelian and post-Hegelian hypothesis within which the problem of my thesis is posed. According to it, "just as human being changes throughout history so must metaphysical truth."[9] If ontologically, human being *is* its historical situatedness, and not an ahistorical "nature," then the transcending intelligibility which philosophy as *ontological* self-knowledge discloses must itself be historically situated and attentive to the being of finite, situated selves. This points to the second assumption without which the problem of my thesis would be unintelligible, namely, the

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[9]Ibid., pp. 12-13.

view that human being is in fact not a permanent, ready-made human nature, but rather, an *historically situated self-making.* The thesis that human being is essentially a "situated self-making,"[10] "has been a central, if not *the* central, theme of post-Kantian continental philosophy from Fichte to the early Heidegger."[11] According to this thesis of situated self-making, ontologically we are not ready-made, ahistorical beings who contingently happen to be subject to "accidential historical changes." Rather the human self *is* what it *does*; "man is what he becomes and has become."[12]

In order to understand how the problem of my thesis is intelligible within this framework, it is important to understand that there are two dialectical "moments" of situated self-making. On the one hand, self-making is not isolated and solipsistic, but rather, always already occurs in, and so presupposes, a transcending, interhuman, situating context of intelligibility. Human being, as situated self-making is thus always already *implicated* in an interhuman, englobing context which, *as* an englobing context, always transcends any particular self-making, and so is in some sense "other" than it. It is only on the basis of this situating context and its existential possibilities that any self-making is at all possible or that any theoretical question regarding such self-making is at all intelligible. As self-making, a self's existential possibilities are both limited and enabled by its natural, historical, and most fundamentally, shared "human situation."[13] For our purposes, this

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[10]Ibid., p. 48.

[11]Robert Burch, "Phenomenology, Lived Experience: Taking a Measure of the Topic," *Phenomenology and Pedagogy*, v. 8, (1990) p. 157n.3.

[12]Fackenheim, *Metaphysics and Historicity*, p. 48.

[13]Ibid, pp. 71-81.

means that it is only in the context of an "original mutuality,"[14] one where there always already *is* a plurality of unique, "different" individuals with whom we are essentially implicated, that the philosophical "step back" to understand and recognize those different individuals in their difference is first of all an intelligible *possibility*. It is only on the basis of this "original mutuality" that anything like "self" and "other," and so any finite differences, can come meaningfully to be

However, although such philosophical recognition is an intelligible possibility, how is it that such philosophical recognition can be a *requirement*? Why are a self's differences essential to it's very being, and why should the philosophical "step back" recognize these differences as essential? Why should philosophy understand, and so to speak, "do justice" to the unique, individual differences of ourselves and others? This points to the other moment of situated self-making. It is crucial to understand that the human self makes itself, not in general, but as a unique individual. One is not merely the product of an englobing situation, but a unique *self*-making in a situation. Though ontologically we are always already limited and enabled by a shared world of intelligibility, each one of us makes ourselves in this world in *our own* unique way.

> Finite self-making must be understood as limited by a situation which is other than it, and which still enters into its internal constitution; and nevertheless finite self-making must *be* a self-making, not the mere product of external events.[15]

What this means is that finite, unique, individual differences are *ontologically*

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[14]Robert Burch, "Phenomenology and Human Science Reconsidered," *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, v. 9, (1991), p. 45.

[15]Fackenheim, *Metaphysics and Historicity*, p. 48.

relevant to what it means to be human. It is only on this assumption that philosophy as *ontological* self-knowledge should be required to understand and recognize such unique human differences *as* differences.

On this model of situated self-making, each one of us *is* what he or she *does* in an essential relation with a situating, interhuman "world." Philosophy as ontological self-knowledge must seek to understand and recognize the essential meaning of such ontological, historical situatedness. This means that philosophical thinking does not involve an escape from human finitude, but rather, a thoughtful "step back" to reflect on who we are in terms of the full range of our *finite* situatedness. What differentiates post-Kantian continental philosophers, from Hegel to Heidegger, is the degree to which the full import of this ontological situatedness *can* be philosophically recognized, and so "done justice" by finite human beings.[16] As we shall see, this differentiation--especially that between Hegel and Heidegger--reveals what I take to be the essential limits of radical philosophical thought -- i.e. phenomenology -- with respect to understanding and recognizing finite human differences *as* differences.

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[16]For example, for Hegel, who held a thesis of *absolute* self-making, the self ultimately transcends all finite situatedness and otherness, and, no longer limited by finite perspectives, in such transcendence finally *comprehends or recognizes* the absolute sense of its ontological "implicatedness" in a world with others. This level of transcendence is the level of art, religion, and philosophy, and it is only at this level that all ontological dimensions of human finitude are finally "given their due" or redeemed. For Heidegger, however, there is no redemptive, absolute self-making, but only finite, situated self-making. Indeed, for Heidegger, self-making is *ineradicably* finite and situated, and so any attempt to render the whole of finite human existence intelligible inevitably always founders. For Heidegger, the self's very transcendence in philosophical thought is itself a finite, ontological dimension of self-making, and not, as Hegel thought, an *absolute* transcendence of situated selfhood itself. A discussion of Hegel's and Heidegger's accounts will occupy Chapters 1 and 2 respectively.

Now, given this view that the philosophical understanding and recognition of finite human differences is not only an intelligible possibility, but also a requirement, the problem of my thesis ultimately involves what precisely is at stake--both for radical philosophical thought itself and human differences *as* differences--in the philosophical attempt to understand and recognize or "do justice" to the human other in her difference? As such, the problem involves two intersecting trajectories. On the one hand, in philosophically disclosing the finite way in which "self" and "other" originally come to be in the world, can such philosophical thought yet understand and recognize the unique being of ourselves and others in our defining differences? If we make ourselves as individuals, and if individual differences are therefore ontologically relevant, how does philosophical thought, as ontologically tied to this self-making, recognize this fact? *Who* is this human that is recognized, or, as the case may be, *not* recognized? To what extent can such a radical philosophical thoughtfulness, in taking a cautious, reflective, and solitary "step back" from finite everydayness, "do justice" to the finite plurality of human beings in their defining *differences*? What "work" can radical philosophical thought do with respect to understanding and recognizing these defining differences? On the other hand, my thesis aims to question what is at stake in demanding the philosophical recognition of human differences *as* differences. If philosophy, no matter how "radical," always thinks in terms of a *universal*, transcending intelligiblity, does philosophy, in understanding, recognizing or "doing justice" to *particular* differences *as* differences, thereby cease to be philosophy? In what sense can philosophy understand and recognize human differences *as* differences and still *be* philosophy? What are the limits of a *philosophical* recognition of human

differences *as* differences? Can the theoretical activity of philosophy itself, in so far as it requires that we be solitary spectators of the finite, human world, adequately give the different, human voices within that world "their due?" Is the cautious, theoretical "step back" of philosophy by itself adequate to the demands and recognition of human plurality? Or, without impugning the value of such theoretical or philosophical recognition, is it the case that a non-philosophical practice is also required in order to adequately recognize the defining differences which are inherent in human plurality? If so, what is the nature of such a non-philosophical practice, and what then is the relation between this non-philosophical practice and philosophical thought?

One thing that prompts the asking of these questions regarding the relation between philosophical thought and human differences is the particularly modern situation in which we find ourselves. In our present situation we still tend to understand ourselves and our world abstractly in terms of the Enlightenment standard of the isolated and detached, "knowing subject." Politically, this standared is paralleled by an atomistic, possessive individualism and a related faith in the promises of science and technology, an understanding which thoughtlessly leads us to both dominate and be indifferent towards others in their defining differences. It may be that in our time what is needed with respect to the way in which we think about ourselves and others is not more indifferent individualism, or better management and control, but an ontologically original, phenomenological thoughtfulness which attempts to understand and recognize human beings in their ontologically relevant differences. It may also be the case that beyond what each of us can do philosophically to recognize human differences, the practice of "facing

up" to others through speech and action is also required.

Through the Enlightenment came the belief that the ultimate authority for truly understanding and shaping the world was no longer one's feudal landlord or sovereign, one's God, or the empirically vacuous speculations of the metaphysicians, but rather, *one's own reason and will*. Philosophically, Descartes' view that the traditional, transcendent, Platonic forms were in fact immanent to the *res cogitans* as clear and distinct ideas, and that therefore the actuality of the world depends upon *the subject's* positing activity, was radicalized in the Enlightenment, to the extent that the emancipated, modern subject became the linchpin of the universe.

This philosophical turn to the truth that could be secured by the human subject was paralleled by a similar move in the political realm, a move embodied in the political philosophy of John Locke, Thomas Hobbes, and virtually all other contractarian theorists. With the emancipation of the individual from the fetters of feudal and religious authorities, the Enlightenment faith in human reason and the power of the autonomous will led to a re-orientation of *each individual* human being as such to the centre of the universe. Now, it is true that this political move was primarily motivated by a fundamental belief in the unconditioned worth and dignity of each individual, and for creating a political and ethical reality within which such dignity could be actualized. Here one is reminded of Kant's ethical theory, and in particular, the maxim never to treat a human being merely as a means, but as an end. Indeed, the modern notion of "human rights," a notion which most Westerners take for granted, and which has formed the basis of many liberation movements in the twentieth century, is a product of this Enlightenment tradition. Yet in

spite of this Enlightenment concern with the dignity and worth of each individual, the Enlightenment concern with the *individual* has also given rise to an egological view of the human self as being a sort of abstract, possessive "atom" who is ontologically and epistemologically isolated from others. As a result, there has been a tendency to believe that one does not always already share a world with others, but rather, is originally isolated from others, and is therefore "free" to do as he or she pleases. In this way, with the Enlightenment, St. Augustine's *civitas Dei* was melded with the *civitas terrena*,[17] and the only source of human redemption from then on was to be found by each isolated subject, in and through the autonomous and ceaseless rational exercise of one's own will.[18] From then on, the object of political thought, from Hobbes and Locke, to Rousseau, was to show how it was possible for the *civitas terrena* to be formed on the basis of a *contract* agreed upon by autonomous and isolated, possessive individuals.

Formally, this abstract, Enlightenment self-understanding implies two things in terms of one's relations with others: First, because the individual, as "knowing subject," was more or less abstractly identified as an "island" or atom, both ontologically and

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[17]Crane Brinton, *The Shaping of Modern Thought*, (Prentice-Hall, Inc.: Englewood, N.J., 1963), p. 115.

[18]This point is made by Nietzsche in *Daybreak: thoughts on the prejudices of morality*, trans., by R. J. Hollingdale, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1982), p. 48, par. 79: "*A suggestion.* -- If, as Pascal and Christianity maintain, our ego is always *hateful*, how could we ever allow and accept that another should love it--whether god or man! It would be contrary to all decency to let oneself be loved while being all the time well aware that one *deserves* only hatred--not to speak of other defensive sensations.--'But this precisely is the realm of clemency.'--Is your love of your neighbour an act of clemency, then? Your pity an act of clemency? Well, if you are capable of this, go a step further: love yourselves as an act of clemency--then you will no longer have any need of your god, and the whole drama of Fall and Redemption will be played out to the end in you yourselves!"

epistemologically isolated from others, in so far as one is concerned with others at all, one need only be concerned with the identical, atomistic subjectivity of the other, a concern which, because of its abstraction, does not adequately understand and recognize the other in his or her unique differences. This abstract identity of autonomous individuality *as such*, amounts to the view that all human beings, including oneself, are indifferently identical in all respects that are philosophically and politically relevent. In terms of this Enlightenment self-understanding, the voices of others in their uniqueness, their differences, amounts to little more than a cacophonous, modern day Tower of Babel. Second, because the emancipated individual, abstracted from any concrete worldliness, is the linchpin which both constitutes and holds together the universe, *all* otherness and difference becomes something to be mastered, controlled, and dominated through one's will. Difference *as such* is something to be feared and so controlled. The paradigmatic vehicles of such domination, and indeed, with the absence of a god, the sole path of human redemption, are modern science and technology. Buttressed by one's essential indifference towards others in their uniqueness, and obsessed with the possibility of scientific and technological redemtption, one may proceed to master and dominate the world, oblivious to the fact that, in so doing, one always already dominates, and so obliterates, the unique voices of the others with whom one always already lives.

That we have inherited these formal implications of Enlightenment self-understanding is nowadays all too clear. Modern subjectivity, atomistic, possessive individualism and its concomitant domination of, and indifference towards, the welfare of others and our planet, are essential elements in our contemporary self-understanding and

the way in which we choose to dwell on the earth with others. This is painfully clear once one recognizes the trend, now on a global scale, of the commitment of governments to govern their people, not in terms of preserving durable social and political spaces within which human plurality (i.e. differences) may be philosophically and politically understood and recognized *as such*, but rather, in much the same way one would profitably and efficiently run a corporation. Here, human beings are not recognized in their uniqueness or difference, but in their fungible identity as atomistic individuals or "consumers," abstractly bound to a "social contract." Here, philosophcally and politically, there is essentially indifference towards difference. What is worse is that this managerial mentality is not limited to rare positions of power, but rather, is paradigmatic of how most of us tend to understand and comport ourselves in a world with others anyway. As atomistic, possessive individuals, enframed within a mass consumer society, we are apt to be so wrapped up in our own chosen "lifestyle" and the "things" we can procure for that lifestyle, that we are utterly indifferent concerning the welfare of others *as* others. In this way, we thoughtlessly live our own abstract, atomistic lives, unable "to think from the standpoint of somebody else."

In addition, now that we are currently in the business of cloning sheep and monkeys, constructing computer models of the brain, inhabiting space stations, and engaging in Faustian quests for satisfaction in virtual reality--in short, now that we are on the verge of obliterating earthly limitations themselves from the human condition--it is quite clear that, if our time has any god at all, it is our own will and capacity to dominate our world through the enthusiastic cultivation of science and technology. We are

nowadays so in awe of scientific and technological domination and management, that when we do decide to concern ourselves with others, we, like the self-assured European explorers of the sixteenth century,[19] inevitably succeed only in imposing on them the authority of our "god," so that ironically, in our "concern" with others, we are in fact oblivious, though not merely in a benign sense, to "the words and presence of others."

In response to this Enlightenment inheritance, this thesis is structured according to two questions. First, on the assumption that Enlightenment thought has influenced the current prevalence of domination and indifference towards others in their differences and uniqueness we ask: Could it be possible that understanding and recognizing finite human difference *as* difference merely requires more philosophical work in the form of a phenomenological thoughtfulness which is less abstract and more ontologically attuned to our being as situated self-making than the Enlightenment self-understanding? If, as philosophers, our concern is to be able to "think from the standpoint of somebody else," and be attentive to "the words and the presence of others," rather than dominating and being indifferent towards them, what further philosophical or theoretical work can be done concerning our self-understanding? Can the phenomenological thesis of situated self-making, a thesis which, in the case of Hegel and Heidegger, concerns the *ontological basis* of "self" and "others,"and so human differences *as such*, do this work? How does

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[19]As Carlo M. Cipolla, in his *European Culture and Overseas Expansion*, (Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England: Penguin Books Ltd, 1970), p. 99, writes: When Vasco da Gama dropped anchor in the harbour of Calicut, a native asked what the Portuguese were looking for in Asia. The answer of da Gama allegedly was 'Christians and spices'... Bernal Diaz speculating about the motives that had driven him and his like to the Indies, wrote that they had left Europe 'to serve God and his Majesty, to give light to those who were in the darkness and to grow rich as all men desire to do'."

philosophy on the model of situated self-making understand and recognize human differences *as* differences?

Secondly, my thesis will ask what is at stake in such a demand for phenomenological thoughtfulness. What are the limits of the "work" which philosophy might do with respect to understanding and recognizing human differences *as such*? Might it be the case that the work which needs to be done to recognize human differences *as* differences, is not merely philosophical or phenomenological work, no matter how radically attunded to human differences that work may be *as theory*? Is the cautious, theoretical "step back" of philosophy by itself adequate to the demands and recognition of human plurality? Or, without impugning the value of such theoretical or philosophical recognition, is it the case that a non-philosophical practice is also required in order to adequately recognize the defining differences which are inherent to human plurality? What then is the relation between philosophy itself and this non-philosophical practice?

The above questions will be dealt with in the following manner. The answering of the first question will involve an explication of two important philosophical possibilities, namely, two different phenomenological-ontological accounts of selfhood as situated self-making,[20] as provided by Hegel and Heidegger, respectively. In Chapter 1, I shall show how for Hegel, finite human differences are only understood and recognized as such in so

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[20]It is important to note that for Hegel, finite self-making is a rational process which has an absolute and infinite fulfillment. There is no otherness, no reality beyond such absolute self-making. For Heidegger, however, though we are self-making, we are not merely rational self-making, but more fundamentally, interpretive self-making, a self-making which is radically finite and therefore open-ended, admitting of no absolute fulfillment. These points will be further explicated in Chapters 1 and 2.

far as they are, through a process of absolute self-making, finally overcome in a dialectical *Aufhebung*. For Hegel, this *Aufhebung* is realized at the level of absolute philosophical comprehension, where one recognizes or "does justice" to the other human, not contingently in terms of her finite differences, but rather, ontologically, in terms of her essential *identity* as a rationally self-making human being who fundamentally shares a common world with oneself.

In Chapter 2, I shall show how for Heidegger there is no dialectical *Aufhebung* of human finitude in absolute or infinite thought. For Heidegger, human being is not rational or absolute self-making, but rather, finite, interpretive self-making. In his view, instead of obliterating and "forgetting" finite human differences in the dialectical *Aufhebung* of absolute thought, we may thoughtfully "step back" and open ourselves to a more fundamental understanding of the ways in which finite human differences come meaningfully to be in terms of the *finite* interpretive context which always already situates our self-making.

In light of Heidegger's attempt to do more "philosophical work" than Hegel on the issue of finitude and human differences, Chapter 3 will thus address the second question concerning what I take to be the limits of Hegel's, Heidegger's, and indeed *any* philosophical attempt to recognize or "do justice" to human beings in their differences. However, having shown these limits, I shall proceed to ask whether it is intelligible to assert that, beyond what we can do philosophically, without impugning the value of such theoretical or philosophical recognition, is it the case that a non-philosophical practice is also required in order to adequately recognize the defining differences which are inherent

to human plurality? What then is the relation between philosophical thought itself and this non-philosophical practice?

In order to intelligibly respond to this last question, I shall briefly outline an interesting possibility offered by Hannah Arendt in her discussions of thought and action. Arendt had believed that "men, not Man, live on the earth and inhabit the world," and that "we are all the same, that is human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live."[21] For Arendt, this human plurality is fundamental to the human condition, and it is on this basis that her own thinking on the relation between thought and action rests. Although Arendt, through her study of the trial of Adolph Eichmann, came to believe that a genuine, philosophical thoughtfulness--something of which all humans, and not merely professional philosophers are capable--might enable our sense of moral and political judgement concerning our comportment with others, and save us from similar evils, she also came to believe that, in light of Heidegger's own affiliation with National Socialism in 1933, the activity of philosophical thinking is nonetheless an inherently solitary business which always runs the risk of depriving the thinking person of a genuine sense of human plurality, and so any hope of sound moral or political judgement regarding his own comportment within this plurality. As such, while Arendt still believed in the importance, and even the demanding of radical philosophical thoughtfulness in preventing evil,[22] her view was that, if we are to recognize or "do justice" to the plurality of different human beings in any genuine sense, the solitary activity

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[21]Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, Inc., 1959), pp. 9-10.

[22]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 13.

of philosophical thinking itself *must* always be attuned to the changing meaning of our actual, ongoing, *communicative engagement with others,* an activity in which we constantly hear and answer to "the words and the presence of others," and so others *in their relevant differences.* As such, for Arendt, as distinguished from both Hegel and Heidegger, philosophical thinking does not seek to make explicit one compelling story which tells the *truth* of our experience in a world with others, but rather, it pauses to reflect on the ongoing *meaning* of our changing, finite existence in a plural world so that we may then tell each other meaningful stories about our existence.[23] In her view, because the fundamental human condition is that of plurality, and because "man is a thinking being"[24] who is capable of philosophically understanding the full import of this plurality for his being, *both* the non-philosophical practice of speaking and acting with others, and the solitary activity of thoughtfully reflecting on the possible *meaning* (not truth) of this practice are necessary for an adequate recognition of human differences or plurality.

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[23]More will be said about this distinction between Arendt's and Hegel's and Heidegger's views on philosophical thinking in Chapter 3. However, I shall not explicate Arendt's position, but instead, merely pose it as an alternative to Hegel and Heidegger.

[24]Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," *Social Research*, v. 38, (1971), p. 421.

Chapter 1: Hegel on the Self and Other

Introduction

In the attempt to provide an ontologically and epistemologically fundamental account of selfhood that understands and recognizes human differences, and thereby subverts the abstract individualism of the Enlightenment, it may appear objectionable to some commentators to look to Hegel for guidance. For "Hegel is supposed to be an idealist, and the idealist interpretation of the other is that it is a form of the self, or self-othering."[1] On this reading, Hegel represents the culmination of subjective idealism, a view which in turn seems unable to avoid solipsism. On subjective idealist premises, objectivity is dependent upon and relative to the self conceived as *subject*; as subject, the self is *the* epistemological foundation, and "otherness" is reducible to the immanent structures of the self, and so is not "otherness" in any genuine sense. The relation between self and other is merely the one-sided activity of the egological self recognizing only itself in an other. "Strictly speaking, there is no other, the other is only the self or self-othering."[2]

For anyone familiar with Hegel's texts, however, the above view is a misinterpretation which is based on the failure to understand the meaning of Hegel's *dialectical* account of selfhood as *absolute self-making*, and the import of this account for the relation between self and other.[3] As *dialectical*, Hegel's account of selfhood shows

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[1]Robert R. Williams, *Recognition: Fichte and Hegel on the Other*, (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1992), p. 256.

[2]Ibid., p. 256.

[3]On another level, there exists misinterpretations of Hegel which, although they are concerned with the notions of *dialectic* and *absolute self-making*, favour one or the other. Left-wing Hegelians tend to favour Hegel's dialectical account of human experience, to the exclusion of a fulfillment in absolute knowledge. Right-wing Hegelians tend to favour

how the self only emerges as a self-making process in relation to a situating context or 'other', the most fundamental of which is the encounter with another emerging self. As such, the self is not an enclosed atom, but rather, in its very being is interhuman and contextual. The life of the human self is its ongoing dialectical relation with otherness, with difference, the most original of which is its relation with "the other human."[4] However, for Hegel this dialectic is not fragmented and aimless, always captured by the otherness and differences of particular situations and idiosyncracies, but rather, essentially

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Hegel's absolute standpoint, to the exclusion of the concrete dialectic of all forms of human experience. It shall be our task here to avoid such one-sided interpretations. However, because this thesis is especially concerned with explicating concrete human experience, it is crucial that we be especially wary of sliding into the left-wing camp. Thus in our concern with the concrete relation between self and other selves, it shall be important to be critical of Alexandre Kojeve's influential left-wing interpretation of self and other in his *Introduction to the Reading of Hegel: Lectures on the Phenomenology of Spirit*, assembled by Raymond Queneau, ed., Allen Bloom, tr. James H. Nichols, Jr., (New York: Basic Books, 1969). Kojeve's reading of the *Phenomenology* is an atheistic, existential-anthropological reading which takes the master-slave relation to be the whole story of the *Phenomenology*, of selfhood. For the Marxist Kojeve, history is the progression of the labouring slave to overthrow the master, and so achieve freedom. As such, the *Phenomenology* for Kojeve constitutes a history of social development. The problem with Kojeve's account is that it views the whole *Phenomenology*, as well as the whole of human history, in terms of the master-slave relation; as such Kojeve overlooks the meaning of the overall dialectic of *absolute self-making* which is so important to Hegel. For Hegel, the encounter between two emerging selves is merely the ontologically most original form of the dialectic of absolute self-making, a form which, through the course of the *Phenomenology*, itself undergoes change. For Hegel, the interhuman encounter is the necessary first moment in the overall dialectic of absolute self-making, not the whole story.

[4]It is important to note that, throughout this Chapter, I shall use the phrase "the other human" rather than "the human other" in order to express the manner in which Hegel's account recognizes other selves. For Hegel, philosophy does not merely recognize "the human *other*" in her particular difference or otherness; more fundamentally, philosophy recognizes "the other *human*" in her essential identity as rational self-making, an identity which is the essential realization of human being as such. It is only in the context of this essential human identity that any particular differences are meaningful in the first place.

unified and teleological; the dialectic of self-making has an absolute fulfilment or closure, an absolute recovery of oneself from *all* otherness and finite differences.

Yet, for Hegel, such a recovery does not mean that the absolute self merely becomes detached from the world. Rather, as *absolute*, Hegel's account attempts to show how, at the level of absolute thought, the self recognizes that, ultimately, because it *is* its dialectical relation with a situating 'other,' there is no otherness or 'world' to which the self is opposed, and to which therefore the self must build an "epistemological bridge." Most fundamentally, this includes the other human. As absolute, Hegel's account is a bold attempt to legitimate the thesis that humanity may be at home with itself in the world. For Hegel, such a "homecoming" is absolute in the sense that the self both overcomes yet preserves all otherness by recollecting the essential significance of who she has become. At one and the same time, the self is her journey through otherness and difference, yet is the *transcendence* and redemption of that otherness by recollecting that journey in terms of her *whole identity* as a human self. It is through such absolute recollection or self-recognition that *all* otherness and difference is finally recognized or "given its due," including most fundamentally, the other human. It is within the context of an absolute and all-inclusive story of selfhood that the other human--the ontological basis for the beginning of this story--is meaningful and so "recognized." Yet who is this other that the absolute self recognizes? It is crucial to understand that, for Hegel, the self who has transcended all otherness in absolute, philosophical thought, ultimately recognizes the other human as an *essential whole*, and not *merely* the human *other* in her particular differences. Any such particularities, are for Hegel, contingent and only meaningful within the context of

the other's being as a whole, that is, the other as rational self-making. Thus, in being recognized or "given its due," the other human in her *particular* difference is in a sense "put in its proper place" in terms of the *essential* identity of the self as rational self-making. As such, in terms of recognizing the other human, neither are her particular differences merely forgotten, nor do they become the whole story of that other's being. For Hegel, though differences are preserved in thought, to merely recognize the particular *difference* of the human *other* is abstract and one-sided, because it does not properly recognize the whole of the other *human* as another rational self-making who shares a rational world with oneself. Ultimately, it is only at this level of absolute thought or absolute self-recognition that the self recognizes the other human, not merely in terms of particular, contingent differences, but *ontologically* in terms of the essential way in which self and the other human *both* originally come to be as rationally self-making individuals in a world of their own making.

In order to grasp the intelligibility of the above gloss, it will be helpful to provide a preliminary[5] or provisional conception of Hegel's account of the relation between self and other, the most fundamental of which is the *actual* relation between two emerging selves. After that, my inquiry will attempt to unpack the intelligibility and defensibility of this account in the following manner: first, Hegel's account of self and other will be situated

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[5]It is preliminary in the sense that it is merely asserted, and as such, not yet fully explicated in terms of its ultimate intelligibility and defensibility, a requirement which can only be met by providing a close reading of Hegel's text. Here, I begin my explication of his account in a dogmatic and preliminary way so that it may serve as a springboard for further explication and clarification.

within the dialectic of absolute or infinite self-making in the *Phenomenology of Spirit*;[6] secondly, it will be necessary to explicate the section of the *Phenomenology* which deals with the interhuman origin of absolute or rational self-making, namely "Independence and Dependence of Self-Consciousness: Lordship and Bondage;"[7] thirdly, it will be shown that, for Hegel, it is precisely at the culmination of the dialectical process of absolute self-making--thought thinking itself, or "absolute thought"-- that the self (and not just "we," the phenomenological observers who read Hegel's text) genuinely and for the first time *recognizes*, and so preserves, the fact that the other human is essential to its very being.[8] In other words, it is precisely because Hegel's account of selfhood is an *absolutely inclusive*, and so self-conscious account of all essential forms of human experience--of which the relation between self and other selves is the most fundamental-- that it is able to recognize and *preserve* the essential significance of the being of other selves for the being of the self. However, it will be important to make the point that at this level of absolute thought, the self fundamentally recognizes the other human, not merely in her particular differences, but rather, ontologically in terms of *her whole being* as rational self-making, a being in terms of which any "difference" or "particularity" is first of all meaningful. For Hegel, particular human differences are only "given their due" in terms of the essential whole of a self's being, a "whole" which is disclosed in absolute, philosophical thought. This third point will become clearer as the explication proceeds. For now, let us turn to a

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[6]G.W.F. Hegel, *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans., by A.V. Miller, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977). Hereafter cited as *PhS*.

[7]*PhS*., pp. 111-119.

[8]This point will be clarified as the explication proceeds.

preliminary conception of Hegel's account of self and other.

A Preliminary Conception

For Hegel, the relation between self and other is only meaningful in the context of his account of selfhood as absolute self-making. Although Hegel approved of Descartes' and Kant's turn to the thinking, autonomous self, it is clear that Hegel wanted to think of the self in terms more original and concrete than that of the Cartesian inference from *ego cogito* to *ego res cogitans*, from the self-thinking activity itself to the positing of a thinking *thing* or substance which *does* the thinking.[9] Hegel, unlike Descartes or Kant, but like Heidegger later in *Being and Time*, questioned the "subjectivity of the subject."[10] Rather than accept the assumption that the self is given as an *ego res cogitans* which is ontologically and epistemologically *isolated* from or opposed to the world, including other selves, Hegel, in his 1807 text, the *Phenomenology of Spirit*, asked how it is possible for any "self" or *ego cogito* to emerge on the scene in the first place? How does the self come to be in the world? In this way, he wanted to demonstrate the radical thesis that the self is not first of all a ready-made, static "thing" opposed to a world, but rather, first emerges dialectically as a dynamic *situated self-making*. Only as dialectical is the self *causa sui*.

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[9] Robert Williams, *Recognition*, pp. 141-142. Williams illustrates this point by translating and quoting a passage from Hegel's *Vorlesgung uber die Philosophie der Religion*, (Meiner Verlag, 1985): "It is the great progress of our times that subjectivity is acknowledged to be an absolute moment; this is an essential determination. However, everything depends upon how this determination is made."

[10] *BT*, p. 45., *SZ*, p. 24. Here, Heidegger's target is Kant and his failure to "provide an ontology with Dasein as its theme or...to give a preliminary ontological analytic of the subjectivity of the subject."

This emergence of selfhood as situated self-making appears neither as a mere product of the situating context, nor is it merely the determination of an autonomous "self," already given. Rather, self-making emerges *as* the dialectic between both of these actualities, that is, between a situating context (natural, historical, and anthropological)[11], and that which is situated, namely, a purposely engaged human being. Thus, for Hegel, who thought that self-making is willful or *rational self-making*, there is never rational self-making (hence no selfhood), except in relation to a situating context; conversely, there is no situating context, except in relation to rational self-making.

In order to shed some light on the above discussion, it is necessary to comment on the point that for Hegel, self-making is *rational*. The story Hegel is trying to tell with the above notion of situated self-making is the dialectical story of *Reason* or a universal and necessary intelligibility being made actual in the world, a story whose protagonists are we. Hegel, who thought that Reason "governs the world,"[12] wanted to show how it is possible

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[11]Robert Burch, "On Phenomenology and its Practices," *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, v. 7, (1989), p. 207.

[12]G.W.F. Hegel, *The Encyclopaedia Logic*, (Indianapolis/Cambridge: Hackett Publishing Company, Inc, 1991), pp. 56-57. Hereafter cited as *EL*. When Hegel says that "there is reason in the world," what he means is that "reason is the soul of the world, inhabits it, and is immanent in it, as its own, innermost nature, its universal." (p. 56) This is comparable to the ancient idea that *"nous* governs the world." (p. 56) Hegel's basic point is that there is a universal and necessary intelligibility or rationality to our world, and that human beings, because they are rational beings, can and must "think" or comprehend this intelligibility, this "reason in the world." Hegel seems to indicate that the world (i.e. Nature) is not "the other" of thought or reason, and that in fact, Nature, as the "immediate totality...which unfolds itself in the two extremes of logical Idea and Spirit," (*EL*, p. 263) is from the very beginning already infused with intelligibility, with reason. As rational beings, not only can we comprehend the world because it is rational, but we *must* do so because it is only in and through *us*--that is, Spirit, not Nature--that Reason is made actual as the "ruler of the world."

to grasp, and so make actual, the underlying *rationality* or necessary intelligibility of our world. Yet, he did not want to do this in an abstract manner which left the finite standpoints of human "worldliness"out of the story. Indeed, for Hegel, such finite standpoints--of which the relation between self and the other human is the most fundamental--are essential moments of this absolute knowledge. In order for knowledge to be "absolute" or infinite, it must proclaim the "truth," but only insofar as it is inclusive of all essential forms of finite human experience. If absolute or infinite knowledge is to be made actual, no finite or contingent standpoint can stand beyond it, for then such knowledge would not be absolute or infinite. That is why, for Hegel, absolute knowledge or Reason is a *result*, or unfolding of a story which, in order to be made actual, must be *lived* and *told* by the totality of finite, rational beings. Indeed, such a story only unfolds in so far as we *make it so*, that is, only insofar as we *are* rational self-making, or in other words, the self-unfolding of Reason *in the actual world*. The actuality of Reason is inseparable from our historical self-realization. For Hegel, there is no essential difference between the underlying sense of the world, that is Reason, and what is made actual in the world through the our own historical, rational self-making. Thus, says Hegel, "what is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational."[13]

Now, what is important to note here is that by characterizing the governance of Reason in the world as something which is a *result* of our rational self-making, and which is our *telos*, the very idea that something "other" than Reason enters into our experience

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[13]G.W.F. Hegel, *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, ed by Allen W. Wood, trans. By H.B. Nisbet, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1991), p. 20. Hereafter cited as *EPR*.

or rational self-making is unintelligible. Though we may experience ambiguities and mysteries, for Hegel, such experiences only appear as such for a self who is confined to some finite perspective, that is, to a self who has not yet grasped the truth that the actual is none other than the rational, i.e. *its own meaningful imprint on the world*. As such, for Hegel, there is no meaning, no finite standpoint or actuality, which eludes the comprehensive grasp of Reason, for "*what is* is reason."[14]

The above point is crucial. As we shall see, it means that for Hegel, the meaning of the self's relation with the other human is a meaning which does not exist prior to or beyond the process of *rational self-making*. For Hegel, there is no "intersubjectivity *a priori*" which precedes and makes possible all actual encounters between selves. Nor is there a ready-made self who then encounters other such selves. Rather, the actual encounter between flesh and blood selves *is* the original meaning, not only of the self's relation with the other human, but of selfhood itself. However, for Hegel, what human beings make actual in such an encounter is not just any contingent meaning or particular, human differences, but Reason, or what is the same thing, *themselves* as rationally self-determining beings in a world of their own making. This point must be taken in its most radical sense. That is, for Hegel, the "origin" of human being, of rational self-making, is a mutual encounter between "pre-selves." This point is crucial to understanding Hegel's account because it points to the fact that the finite moment of an original, interhuman encounter is meaningful as *the necessary beginning* of the dialectical genesis of absolute, rational self-making or Reason. Since this interhuman encounter is the concrete beginning

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[14]*EPR*., p. 21.

of the story of absolute self-making, it is likewise for Hegel completely and absolutely comprehensible; there is no aspect of the self's encounters with others--or for that matter, any aspect of human finitude, including particular differences--which eludes the absolute grasp of Reason, or what is the same thing, absolute self-knowledge.

Having said this, however, we must now demonstrate how rational self-making itself first comes on the scene *from the perspective of the natural "pre-self."* As we have noted above, the most fundamental or primative moment of the dialectic of rational self-making is for Hegel, the dialectical relation between two "pre-selves." For Hegel, this logically primative moment is an ideal-typical encounter between two incipient "pre-selves," where each requires and depends upon the recognition of the other in order to achieve self-consciousness, i.e. selfhood, as rationally or meaningfully determined by oneself. As Hegel says in the *Phenomenology*:

> Self-consciousness exists in and for itself in and through the fact that it exists *in-and-for-itself-for-another*; that is, it exists only as a being-acknowledged.[15]

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[15]G.W.F. Hegel, *Phaenomenologie des Geistes*, (Hamburg: Verlag von Felix Meiner, 1952), p. 141. Hereafter cited as *PhG*. My translation and emphasis. It is important to note that while the Miller and Baillie translations of this passage are basically correct, they are less precise than the German. Thus Miller writes: "Self-consciousness exists in and for itself when, and by the fact that, it so exists for another; that is, it exists only in being acknowledged." (p. 111). Baillie's translation is more precise than Miller's: "Self-consciousness exists in itself and for itself, in that, and by the fact that it exists for another self-consciousness; that is to say, it *is* only by being acknowledged or "recognized"." (p. 229) The German, however, is more precise: "Das Selbstbewusstsein ist *an* und *fuer sich*, indem und dadurch, dass es fuer ein anderes an und fuer sich ist; d.h. es ist nur als ein Anerkanntes." In the German, the point is made that the very being of the self *is* a *being-acknowledged*, an *Anerkanntes*. This explains my emphasis on the unity of the phrase, "in-and-for-itself-for-another." The tendency of both the Miller and Baillie translations is that, in the effort to precisely analyze the moments of this original dialectic of selfhood, an artificial separation is made between an existing self-consciousness, and the

Boldly stated in this manner, however, Hegel's account may seem paradoxical. If Hegel is trying to subvert the claim that the self is merely a given or "ready-made" *res* or "thing," how does it make sense to uphold a thesis of *self*-making? Is it even intelligible to assert that the self is *causa sui*? How can a self be *self*-making before it actually *is*? As we shall see later in the section on "Lordship and Bondage," Hegel did not doubt the fact that humans are originally "given" or "ready-made"in the world as unreflective and embodied, natural beings, or "pre-selves," so to speak. Like animals, we are originally immersed in the "expanse of Life," in Nature. What he did question was the view that what defines us essentially as "human," that is, *self-consciousness* or rational self-making, is merely given. Yet if it is not given, how does this distinctively "human" quality come about?

Before this question may be answered, it is important to return to the issue of whether the self is merely "given," or whether it is *causa sui*. Part of the difficulty in understanding Hegel's account of self-making is due to our tendency to borrow the conceptual tools of medieval ontology and simply look for a more primordial ground or "substance" which *does* the "making,"or action, and which remains self-identical, despite the various predicates which are "added on" by the "making" or "constructing"activity of the substantial self. Like Aquinas, who attempted to show that the notion of God as *causa sui* is a contradiction in terms, we tend to view the notion of a self-making self as

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condition of its possibility, i.e. recognition. As such, the significance of the dialectical character of self-making is obscured. For Hegel, self-consciousness or self-making *is* orignially a being-acknowledged, an Anerkanntes. There is no essential separation between the two. This point is crucial to understanding the *dialectical* character of Hegel's account of rational self-making and the interhuman encounter.

unintelligible, because if the self already existed in order to then "make" itself, it would not need to make itself (because it already *is*); and if the self did not already exist, it could not *be* something capable of "making" at all. However, the problem with this view is that it presupposes that which it attempts to prove, namely the immediacy of the substantial self.

The novelty of Hegel's account, because it is dialectical and absolute, is that it subverts this very presupposition. Because Hegel was concerned with an *absolute* account of rational self-making, that is, with the historical unfolding of Reason in the world in and through finite beings, he thought it was neccesary to give a comprehensive account of the "history" of selfhood itself, *from its origins, to its highest realization*. To fail to do so would deny the very nature of ourselves as rationally self-making, historical creatures; it would moreover deny the absolutness of Hegel's account, for it would have to posit some unknowable Other, beyond Reason, which determines or "causes" our essential being.

For Hegel, *no* aspect of selfhood, including the *origin* of selfhood, is wholly separate from our *own* rational self-making and absolue recognition of that self-making. Thus, for Hegel, *any* view of *rational* selfhood that assumes a given self, is itself not rational, but unintelligible, because paradoxically, it credits the origin of our very essence to the incomprehensible, giving Other, rather than our own activity of rational self-making. In a paradoxical sense, such a view would have to hold that even though we understand ourselves to be different from animals in that we are *essentially* rational, self-determining beings who question and reflect on the ultimate sense or intelligibility of our existence, we nonetheless owe our essential being to that which ultimately *eludes* our rational

comprehension, to an incomprehensible Other who somehow "gives" us over to the world. It was precisely this unbridgeable dualism which Hegel attempted to subvert by providing an *absolute* account of rational self-making, which, from beginning to end, is comprehensible.

Having said this, however, a nagging problem still remains. If we are originally natural beings, and if we are not merely "given" as a rational, substantial self by Nature or God, how is it possible for us to *make* ourselves somehow other than merely natural, that is, into self-conscious *selves*? How does the finite pre-self experience this dialectical origination of rational self-making?

Hegel's answer is that the dialectic of rational self-making must presuppose nature as already differentiated *in itself*, or that it is what he calls "the immediate totality."[16] In Hegel's view, nature and reason are not originally separated by an unbridgable abyss, but rather, like the ancient philosophers, he thought that "*nous* governs the world, or by our own saying that there is reason in the world, by which we mean that reason is the soul of the world, inhabits it, and is immanent in it, as its own, innermost nature, its universal."[17] Because reason is already immanent in nature, nature is already differentiated in terms of an intelligible totality, though only in an abstract and immediate sense. What remains is for this totality to mediately unfold itself according to its immanent criteria of universal and necessary intelligibility, and with such an unfolding, to become explicit and intelligible to itself. For Hegel, such an unfolding is carried out by the historical totality of human

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[16]*EL*, p. 263.
[17]*EL*., p. 56.

rational self-making or "Spirit," a process which is already prefigured in the existence of the natural pre-self. Hegel's view is that, unlike animals, the *human* animal or "pre-self"is essentially different in that, so long as it remains ensconced in natural life, it *is* a dissatisfaction and indeterminate longing for something which its natural existence does not provide. As a natural being, it is not yet aware or self-conscious regarding this longing. It simply is dissatisfied or frustrated *in* its natural existence: it *is* a dissatisfied yearning. What Hegel's account of self and other shows is that the "pre-self" only becomes aware of, and so satisfies, this yearning by its *own act* of transcending the limitations of natural life. *But it can only do this through the mediation of another "yearning pre-self."* What these pre-selves realize in the encounter is *themselves* as beings who had yearned, not merely to be determined by Nature, or the "giving" Other, but by themselves. They actualize themselves as *Reason*, or rational self-making. Only through this interhuman dialectic is selfhood *causa sui*, that is, self-making; only through this dialectic does reason unfold in the world. Each self *recognizes and so confirms* the other as a self-making in its own right, and neither is self-making without this mutual confirmation. For Hegel, in order to be self-making, or *for oneself*, one must, and indeed only can, first of all show oneself to be this way *for another*, who then recognizes one as self-making. As we have noted above, for Hegel, one *is* "in-and-for-itself-for-another". One originally and ontologically is "a being-acknowledged," an *Anerkanntes*. This process of recognition is a reciprocal process, and indeed, must be so. Here one must keep in mind that the above process is necessarily an *experienced or lived* process. If Reason is to be made actual in the world, it must *actualize itself* in the course of finite,

human experience. Thus, the pre-self is not on a "quest" for some determinate object. Rather, from out of its unsatisfying natural existence (remember, it does not yet know why such existence is unsatisfying; it simply *is* dissatisfaction) it simply encounters another yearning pre-self, and in that encounter first comes to *regard itself*. The point here is that the pre-self's emergence as rational self-making is *coeval* with an actual encounter with another "pre-self." Through this encounter, the pre-self first becomes aware that in truth, it is rational self-making, and it is with this recognition that the pre-self in actuality thus *becomes* rational self-making, i.e. a "self".

Now, what is crucial for this overall explication, is that, while *we* can recognize the importance of the interhuman encounter for the transformation from "pre-self" to "self," the recently formed, primitive self we are observing in the *Phenomenology* is *itself* not yet aware of the significance of this essential moment. It immediately becomes absorbed in the novelty of itself at the expense of all otherness, and is therefore unable to recognize and comprehend the essential importance of the other human for its very being. While the self comes to regard itself as self-making, it does so only in an abstract sense. It does not yet recognize that it is a *situated* self-making. But because Hegel is concerned with an *absolute* account of rational self-making, the self *must* come to this recognition. Or, put differently, Hegel's account is absolute only if the self, having laboured with *all* otherness and difference, becomes *self-conscious* and thereby recognizes that such otherness is not alien to it, but rather, necessarily a part of its very being. One task of the dialectical path of the *Phenomenology* is to demonstrate how the self gradually overcomes the one-sided, egological view that it is opposed to the world, and how ultimately, the self, in an absolute

form of thought which has been *educated* by its own concrete experience in the world, comes to the recognition of its original, ontological dependence on interhuman situatedness. Such absolute self-recognition in thought constitutes the self's *transcendence* of such interhuman situatedness. But this transcendence is not a stoical retreat from the world. On the contrary, the crucial point is that, for Hegel, it is *only* with the transcendence of such absolute self-knowledge, that the significance of the self's encounter with the other human--another rational self-making-- may be recognized and *preserved* as such. In this way, the other human is recognized in terms of the *whole* of her rational self-making, not *merely* in her particular differences.

Such is the general sense of Hegel's account of self-making and the other human. In order to unpack the intelligibility and defensibility of Hegel's account, it will be necessary to more closely focus our explication on Hegel's text itself. Accordingly, I first offer some general comments on the meaning and purpose of the text itself, the most significant of which is to provide an account of absolute self-making. Secondly, within the context of this account of absolute self-making, I then explicate the section of the *Phenomenology*-- "Lordship and Bondage"--which demonstrates the interhuman origins of absolute self-making. Finally, I attempt to show that, for Hegel, the other human is recognized at the level of absolute thought, not merely in her particular differences, but in terms of her whole being as a rational self-making with whom we share a world.

The *Phenomenology of Spirit*: Absolute Self-Making

For our purposes, the most important point to make concerning Hegel's task in the *Phenomenology* is that it was an attempt to show how it is necessary to provide an account of absolute knowledge or philosophic thought which would be inclusive and expressive of the truth of *all* essential forms of finite, human experience, indeed, all actuality. The *Phenomenology* is not merely an account of how knowledge or cognition of a system of objects is possible; it is rather an account of how knowledge of such knowledge is at all possible, that is, of *absolute knowledge*, or what is the same thing, absolute *self*-knowledge or self-recognition.

Hegel had thought that his was "a birth-time and a period of transition to a new era,"[18] a "time for philosophy to be raised to the status of Science."[19] In his own time, Hegel thought it would be possible to finally realize the "proper subject matter" [*die Sache selbst*] of philosophy, namely, "the actual cognition of what truly is,"[20] where the "true is the whole,"[21] instead of yet another "bare assurance" which is "worth just as much as another."[22]

In presenting such absolute knowledge, however, Hegel did not, like Schelling, promise an *immediate* and abstract account of truth or absolute knowledge, as if "shot from a pistol."[23] "Truth," says Hegel, echoing Aquinas, " is not a minted coin that can be

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[18] *PhS.*, p. 6.
[19] *PhS.*, p. 3-4.
[20] *PhS.*, p. 46.
[21] *PhS.*, p. 11.
[22] *PhS.*, p. 49.
[23] *PhS.*, p. 16.

given and pocketed ready-made."[24] Rather, for Hegel, since absolute knowledge refers to one's comprehension of the concrete "living whole" of human existence--where one always already is--what it means to raise oneself to the absolute is to achieve a comprehensive grasp of *how* that concrete "living whole" of human existence (of which every self is an essential part)[25] *comes to be in the world.*

> The True is the whole. But the whole is nothing other than the essence consummating itself through its development. Of the Absolute it must be said that it is essentially a *result*, that only in the *end* is it what it truly is; and that precisely in this consists its nature, viz. to be actual, subject, the spontaneous becoming of itself.[26]

Here it is crucial to note that for Hegel, the "new era" within which philosophy could be "raised to the status of Science" was the "Spirit" of the modern era in which the principle of human freedom--or what is the same thing, autonomous, rational self-making--was realized in the world. Indeed, Hegel wrote the *Phenomenology* in the context of this modern "Spirit," and for the purpose of fully comprehending and explicating the historical realization of this Spirit, or what is the same thing, the realization of absolute self-making. For Hegel, modern human beings exist at a time in which, at least in principle, human being is not merely recognized as a slave to be dominated, but rather, in the form of the Constitution of a modern state, is recognized as autonomous or rational self-making, and

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[24] *PhS.*, p. 22.

[25] *PhS.*, p. 265. In the beginning of the "Spirit" section Hegel refers to "the individual that is a world." His point, as we shall see shortly, is that the individual is at one and the same time an expression or product of her spiritual community (and so fundamentally situated by that community), and at the same time, as self-making, constitutive of that community. As such, the individual or self is "at home" in her community or "world."

[26] *PhS.*, p. 11.

so as having unconditioned worth. Nonetheless, for Hegel this truth can only be fully and concretely actualized by comprehending in absolute thought how that truth came to be in the world. In other words, only as "Spirit certain of itself," or Absolute Spirit may the recognition of human freedom or rational self-making be a concrete actuality.

Thus, in order to essentially comprehend the self's true existence in a modern human community, what Hegel calls "*Substance*," or "Objective Spirit," one must consider *how that reality originally comes to be*, what Hegel calls "*Subject*,"[27] or "Subjective Spirit." This is the task of the *Phenomenology of Spirit*. The absolute comprehension which results from such a consideration Hegel thus calls "Absolute Spirit." To be sure, the community within which a self is situated, because it is an everyday reality, is already immediate or "familiar" to the self. Such a self may even naively think it already has a comprehension of its relation to its community, of spirit. But Hegel's point is that "the familiar, just because it is familiar, is not cognitively understood."[28] In order for selfhood as absolute self-making to cognitively understand itself and its relation to its community or "world," it must shun immediacy and instead, philosophically "step back," and seek a comprehension which is concrete and *mediate*, incorporating all essential forms of experience. In other words, it must consider the relation between the self and its community or world, in terms of the ontologically original, dialectical genesis of that very *relation*. How did "self" and "community" or "world" come to be meaningful in the first

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[27]*PhS.*, pp. 9-10. As Hegel says, "In my view, which can be justified only by the exposition of the system itself, everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*."

[28]*PhS.*, p. 18.

place? Indeed, it is just this question which points to the relevance of Hegel's account of the origin of selfhood, as contained in the life and death struggle and the master-slave parable. As the following explication will show, Hegel's account of the interhuman origin of selfhood is the most original form of any process of rational self-making, and so, ontologically, is also the most original, though primitive form of any human communality. Moreover, it is only within the context of an account of absolute self-making that such an original, interhuman moment may be both transcended and preserved in its significance. In the modern recognition of the unconditioned worth of each individual--the realization of freedom or rational self-making--the primitive domination of the life and death struggle and the master-slave parable is *transcended*, while what is preserved is the modern recognition of the other human as essentially not a "thing," not an object of domination, but that upon which the being of any rational self-making originally depends, i.e., another rational self-making. As absolutely self-making, the self, having transcended all otherness and differences in thought, arrives at the critical recognition that fundamentally, it *only* comes to be in relation with other rationally self-making selves. For Hegel, only by comprehending these ontological origins may a self be rationally "at home in the world" and recognize the other human in her rational self-making.

Having said this, let us now turn to the *Phenomenology* itself, and demonstrate the origins of rational self-making. Here, it should be noted that the foregoing analysis, because its subject matter is the origin and *dialectical genesis* of the *process* of self-making, shall itself attempt to follow the dynamic, dialectical path demonstrated by Hegel. The truth of selfhood--i.e. that it is ontologically dependent upon other selves--is a truth

which is actual only in so far as it can be demonstrated intelligibly. To be sure, this is not the place to attempt a commentary on the entire *Phenomenology*. Rather, since our concern is with the self and other selves within the context of absolute self-making, we shall have to limit our inquiry to an examination of the interhuman origin of self-making (i.e. the life and death struggle and the master-slave relation), and the way in which that origin is transcended yet preserved at the level of absolute selfhood.

The Origin of Absolute Self-making: The Interhuman Encounter

A. From Consciousness to Self-consciousness: Entering the "native realm of truth"

Hegel's account of the interhuman encounter first appears in the *Phenomenology* as an account which serves as a conceptual or logical beginning to the overall story of absolute self-making. Though this is the case, however, Hegel does not begin the *Phenomenology* itself with the master-slave parable and the constitution of selfhood. Instead, the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology* deal with a ready-made self, viewed abstractly as a "knowing subject" who posits objects of knowledge. We need not go into a detailed discussion of the dialectical progression of these chapters here. However, the significance of Hegel's move from "Consciousness" in the first three chapters, to the issue of selfhood in "Self-Consciousness" in chapter four, cannot be ignored. Hegel wanted to provide an *immanent critique* of the assumed, ontological priority of the "knowing subject" of the Enlightenment. For Hegel, it is the failure of the

"knowing subject" to measure up to its own criteria of certainty that leads to a "new beginning" in the examination of the more fundamental discussion of the origin of selfhood itself. Thus, before we move on to the master-slave parable and its concept of recognition, a word should be said concerning the transition from section A to section B.

The most important point concerning the move from section A, "Consciousness," to section B, "Self-Consciousness," is that there is a shift in focus from a concern with how an abstract, "Enlightenment" subject constitites and can have certainty regarding objects, to a concern with the way in which a concrete self or subject itself is first of all constituted. This shift is important if one recalls that the *Phenomenology* for Hegel is an absolute story of the dialectical genesis of selfhood in all of its dimensions, not merely its function as an abstract, knowing subject. As absolutly self-making, the self for Hegel is not merely an abstract, knowing subject who loses itself in its objects, its "other." To hold such a position would mean that selfhood is essentially limited by otherness and so not absolute at all. If by "absolute," Hegel means radical openness, then he would not be justified in limiting his account to the knowing subject, who far from being absolute, is *limited by its object, its other*. Thus, what Hegel needs to show in the course of the *Phenomenology* is that the knowing subject in "Consciousness" is an abstraction and that in actuality, all otherness or "objects of knowledge" are originally the products of the absolute self. The important point here is that the self necessarily discovers *itself* in its object, its other, and that such a discovery makes explicit the truth that the self is not originally separated from "objects" or "others" by an ontological and epistemological abyss, but rather, as rational self-making is originally the author of such apparent

otherness. As such, the emphasis in Hegel's text turns from the question concerning how the subject may have certainty regarding objects, to the more concrete, critical inquiry into the ontological origins of the subject or self itself. It is only by taking such a radical turn towards the emergence of the self that an absolute account of self-making is possible.

However, it is important to point out that the move from section A to B is not arbitrary, nor is it one which is warrented by some external standard. Rather, it is a dialectical move which is warrented by the *immanent* demands of the subject matter itself. Hegel's text is concerned with the demonstration of the self-unfolding of absolute certainty, what Hegel calls "the detailed history of the *education* of consciousness itself to the standpoint of Science,"[29] or "the True."[30] As such, his text must demonstrate the emergence of a measure for certainty. Hegel thus begins with the abstract, knowing subject and what the subject knows in knowing its object. The *Phenomenology* begins with the assumption that it is precisely "what the subject knows in knowing its object" that will furnish a measure for certainty. Here, the self is taken for granted as a ready-made, isolated "knowing subject" who passively sits as spectator and judge before the objects of the world. It is the bifurcated self who is able to leave behind the limits of everyday, pragmatic living, and find pure knowledge in the disinterested pursuits of scientific inquiry. Such a self searches for a stable measure of certainty or truth in its object, "something other than itself,"[31] but here, where the apparant constancy of objects merely vanishes in

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[29]*PhS.*, p. 50.
[30]*PhS.*, p. 10.
[31]*PhS.*, p. 104.

the self's experience of them,[32] no determinate measure for certainty is ever found. Ultimately, in its search for a stable measure of certainty, consciousness is thrown back upon itself. In its empty attempt to differentiate itself from "the other" and find certainty in the other, it gradually becomes aware of this differentiating activity and the actuality that it is merely differentiating itself from itself. Without going into the details of the ultimate *failure* of the search for certainty in "the other," Hegel's point is that the conscious self, frustrated that "the other" does not seem to satisfy the search for certainty, comes to the realization that the locus for certainty, "the native realm of truth,"[33] is *itself*. Hence, Hegel's unfolding of absolute certitude takes a new direction. While in section A the concern was with what consciousness knows in knowing its object, the concern in section B, and indeed the remainder of the *Phenomenology*, is "*what consciousness knows in knowing itself*,"[34] that is, self-consciousness. What is thus required is an account of *self-certainty*, an account which for Hegel must be an absolute account, comprehensive of both the genesis and *telos* of the self. In other words, Hegel must demonstrate the unfolding of absolute self-making, from its origins to its end.

Thus, Hegel's point in beginning the *Phenomenology* with the self as a ready-made epistemological subject, was precisely to show that such a conception of selfhood is *not* the most original and concrete, but rather, is abstract and situated within a more fundamental or ontologically original context of absolute self-making. In this way, Hegel did not want to simply do away with epistemology or science. Rather, he wanted to put

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[32] *PhS.*, p. 104.
[33] *PhS.*, p. 104.
[34] *PhS.*, p. 103.

epistemology and science "in their place,"[35] by showing that they are subservient to, and ultimately only intelligible within the ontological context of the self's pragmatic engagement or "making" within the world. The shift from section A to B is thus a move from the abstract, Enlightenment standpoint of scientific knowledge, to the more concrete and original, pragmatic interests or *desires* of a living and embodied "pre-self." Hegel, following Fichte and heralding Heidegger, wanted to provide an original account of selfhood which views scientific knowledge as a *function* of situated self-making.[36] Acquiring scientific knowledge is merely one thing the self does, but it always does so in the context of some pragmatic engagement with the world. Hegel wanted to describe how we *do* actually experience the world prior to any scientific theorizing about how we *ought*

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[35]Robert C. Solomon, *In the Spirit of Hegel: A Study of G.W.F. Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1983), p. 392.

[36]Ibid., p. 387-390. Reacting to the Kantian distinction between pure reason and practical reason, Fichte came to view knowledge in terms of interest. "The argument is that one *cannot* have knowledge without consideration of its practical and personal context." (p. 387) Solomon also notes that Martin Heidegger too makes this argument in *Being and Time*. For Heidegger, we are fundamentally beings who are pragmatically engaged within a context of meaning. On this view, epistemological concerns are understood as determinate modes of being-in-the-world. The self can exist as a "knower," positing objects, but that mode of being is always already situated--and ultimately meaningful--within the context of that self's projects in-the-world. Or as Solomon says: "Arguing against his teacher, Edmund Husserl, who held an unabashedly theoretical view of consciousness (with mathematics his primary interest), Heidegger suggested instead that our "natural viewpoint in the world" is not as observer but as *being-there* ("*dasein*"), and the entities we come to know are not "Things" (as in Hegel's chapter 2) but rather *tools* and *instruments*, with which we can *do* things and satisfy our desires." (p. 389). What differentiates Hegel and Heidegger on this issue--a point Solomon does not make--is the point that while for Hegel it is possible to give a complete (and transcendent) account of the role of knowledge in the overall dialectic of self-making, for Heidegger, there is no such "grand narrative" to tell. There are rather, englobing contexts of meaning within which the self lives its projects. Knowlege is simply one possible mode of being--albeit an abstract one--within this more fundamental context.

to experience the world.

Another way of looking at the shift from section A to B is that it answers the critical question of how it is that the pursuit of scientific knowledge itself is possible or intelligible. What is the "truth" of scientific knowledge? Is the self essentially nothing more than the pursuit of scientific knowledge, or is there something more fundamental to being a self? According to Hegel, scientific knowledge itself cannot furnish this transcendent insight into its own nature and *raison d'etre*.[37] As a result, it is inadequate as an absolute or complete account of selfhood. For such insight, one must look outside of or "behind" the standpoint of scientific knowledge, in order to see what situates, and so essentially defines it. His answer, as section B indicates, is that scientific knowledge is only intelligible in terms of the pragmatic interests or desires of the *self*. Having made this pragmatic turn towards the self and its projects, however, Hegel does not soften his critical gaze in favour of a theory of pragmatism; on the contrary, he intensifies it by looking deeper into the ontological structure of selfhood itself.

> With self-consciousness, then, we have therefore entered the native realm of truth. We have now to see how the shape of self-consciousness first makes it appearance.[38]

Self-consciousness "finds all truth in itself."[39] On this view, as we have seen above, genuine knowledge is thus essentially self-knowledge.[40] Given this point, however,

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[37] This is the conclusion of the first three chapters of the *Phenomenology*.

[38] *PhS*., p. 104.

[39] H.G. Gadamer, *Hegel's Dialectic: Five Hermeneutical Studies*, trans. by P. Christopher Smith, (New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1976), p. 59.

[40] Such a statement clearly reflects the thesis of self-making. For the thesis of self-making, not only is there no self except in relation to other, but equally, there is no other except in relation to self. What this last element of the dialectic implies is that the

it is important to remember that for Hegel, there is no given and ready-made self "there" to be known like any other object. Rather, for Hegel, a self *is* essentially its own self-making. What this means is that an account of "self-knowledge" can only be given in terms of how the self comes to be or makes itself. For Hegel, to "know" a self (as well as the self's world) is to know how it and its world come meaningfully to be. Accordingly, Hegel's next critical question becomes: How is selfhood, indeed the very being of the human self, possible or intelligible? If the pragmatically situated self is the condition for the possibility of scientific knowledge, what then is the condition for the possibility of the pragmatically situated self? If selfhood is self-making, how does that "making" begin? What, in terms Hegel would not have used, is the logical "cause" of the self? It is with these questions in mind that we may now shift our focus from the objects of scientific knowledge to the dialectic involved in the emergence of selfhood itself.

B. From Desire to Mutual Recognition

According to Hegel, the condition for the possibility of selfhood or self-consciousness, is the life and death struggle for recognition between two incipient selves, a logical origin known as the master-slave parable. In this parable, genuine selfhood "comes

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self constitutes the other in its otherness; the self differentiates itself from the other, and in so doing constitutes the other as other. Now, what happens in the beginning of the *Phenomenology* is that the self is considered abstractly as an isolated "subject," severed from otherness. The other is conceived by the self as simply given. What Hegel does in the *Phenomenology* is to show how this dualistic view of self and other is a result of the abstract self's misunderstanding of the dialectical nature of selfhood. For the self to gain full self-possession, and so be at home in the world, the self must recognize this misunderstanding and see that the other (i.e., the world) *is* that which the self makes actual in and through its rational self-determination.

on the scene" for the first time with the moment of mutual recognition or acknowledgement.

> Self-consciousness exists in and for itself in and through the fact that it exists *in-and-for-itself-for-another*, that is, it exists only as a being-acknowledged.[41]

This statement represents the kernal of Hegel's account of the interhuman origins of selfhood. Its depiction of selfhood as originally "a being-acknowledged" shall thus be central to our explication of Hegel's account of selfhood and the other human. However, in order to fully grasp the significance of this moment of recognition, we must, with Hegel, follow the primitive self--or better, the desirous pre-self--in its own movement towards that moment.

Again, it is important to remember that for Hegel, "everything turns on grasping and expressing the True, not only as *Substance*, but equally as *Subject*."[42] Thus, if Hegel's project is to show how absolute knowledge is possible, then he must concretely demonstrate "the spontaneous becoming of itself,"[43] that is absolute *self-making*. The absolute, in order to be absolute, must make itself or be *causa sui*. For Hegel, such spontaneous self-making only occurs with the emergence of the human self from out of nature. It is only by witnessing this "spontaneous becoming" of the self that absolute self-making, and so absolute knowledge is at all intelligible. As we shall see, such spontaneity springs forth from the very tension or unease inherent in the experience of the desirous pre-self, a tension which points toward the moment of recognition (i.e. being-

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[41] *PhG.*, p. 141, *PhS.*, p. 111.
[42] *PhS.*, p. 9-10.
[43] *PhS.*, p. 11.

acknowledged) and the subsequent dialectic of absolute self-making.

Hegel thus "begins" his account of selfhood in section B with the most primitive form of self-consciousness, the desirous pre-self. As "phenomenological observers" of the emergence of selfhood, we leave behind the epistemological concerns of section A, and suddenly become immersed in the experience of the desirous pre-self of biological life. At this stage, the pre-self is, properly speaking, not yet a self, but rather, the immediate and abstract feeling or sensation of selfness, a feeling which Hegel refers to as desire [*Begierde*].[44] "Self-consciousness," says Hegel, "is *Desire* in general."[45] As such, the pre-self is not a separate "thing" or substance from which desire, as one contingent feeling among many, flows. The pre-self does not *have* desire. Rather--and this is crucial--for Hegel, the pre-self *is* desire.

Now, in order to understand what Hegel does with the notion of desire and the pre-self described above, it shall be important to remember the dialectical nature of his account of situated self-making. On the one hand, there is no self except in relation to a situating other. There is only self-making in a situation. On the other hand, there is no situating other, except in relation to self-making. For purposes of clarity, it shall be helpful to consider Hegel's discussion of desire in the context of these two distinct yet inseparable moments of the dialectic of self-making. Provisionally, it shall be necessary to deal with these two dialectical moments in abstraction. First, the pre-self shall be viewed in terms of "natural situatedness," or animal desire. Secondly, the pre-self shall be viewed

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[44] *PhS.*, p. 105-110.
[45] *PhS.*, p. 105.

in terms of the "pure power of self-making,"[46] or human desire. After this abstract treatment, however, it shall be necessary to show how both moments constitute the tension or unease which is the concrete experience of the desirous pre-self. In other words, it will be shown that the desire of the pre-self *is* the dialectical tension between natural situatedness (i.e. animal desire) and the "power of self-making" (i.e. human desire), and it is this very tension, and in particular, the unsettling persistence of human desire, which prefigures the emergence of selfhood through interhuman recognition.

On the one hand then, Hegel begins his account of selfhood with the moment of biological situatedness or animal desire. At this level, there is, properly speaking, no actual differentiation between "self" and "nature" at all. There is only "the expanse of life" within which the pre-self as animal desire is submerged.[47] As we shall see later, Hegel's larger thesis is that in order for there to be a "self" at all, it must differentiate itself from and so overcome the whole of nature,[48] and thereby actualize itself as an autonomous, rationally self-determining being. But that means that the pre-self must *begin* as a part of, though not wholly a part of, biological life, and from within that situation, dialectically *emerge* as the product of its own making, rather than as a mere product of biological life.

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[46] Emil Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension in Hegel's Thought*, (Bloomington & London: Indiana University Press, 1967), p. 39.

[47] *PhS.*, p. 114.

[48] See *PhS*, p. 113, where Hegel notes that the "pure abstraction of self-consciousness consists in showing itself as the pure negation of its objective mode, or in showing that it is not attached to any specific *existence*, not to the individuality common to existence as such, that it is not attached to life." Hegel's point is that for self-consciousness to occur, and for selfhood to emerge, the pre-self must negate the whole of nature, not just this or that part of nature (in which case it would still be an expression of nature). Also see Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 39.

According to Hegel, the pre-self only emerges as a self--and so negates and overcomes biological life-- through the non-natural mediation (i.e. recognition) of and by another such pre-self. In order to grasp this point, however, we must first understand *what it is like to be* this biological pre-self.

At the primitive pre-self level, though there is an individual "I" which, in the attempt to be certain of itself, tries to assert itself against a world, it is, for the most part (though not wholly), still an expression of biological or "animal" life .

> Self-consciousness is, to begin with, simple being-for-self, self-equal through the exclusion from itself of everything else. For it, its essence and absolute object is `I'; and in this immediacy, or in this [mere] being, of its being-for-self, it is an *individual*. What is `other' for it is an unessential, negatively characterized object.[49]

This "I" acts as a member of a species, trying to preserve itself at the expense of every object it encounters. It is comparable, though not identical, to animal life.

> Even the animals are not shut out from this wisdom but, on the contrary, show themselves to be most profoundly initiated into it; for they do not just stand idly in front of sensuous things as if these possessed intrinsic being, but, despairing of their reality, and completely assured of their nothingness, they fall to without ceremony and eat them up.[50]

This form of self is the most primitive form because it, like that of animals, destroys its object by literally devouring or assimilating it. In desiring an object, the self here is immediate *being-for-self*, it seeks its own self-certainty or satisfaction by negating particular objects in the world (i.e., this apple, this chicken, etc.), that is, by consuming or annihilating them. Yet, precisely because these objects are destroyed, the self's "self-

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[49] *PhS*, p. 113.
[50] *PhS*., p. 65.

certainty still has no truth."[51] Just as each object is annihilated and reduced to nothingness, so too is the self's self-certainty. The self, because it is what it does,[52] in effect *is* its desire, but because the means through which it satisfies its desires is the natural non-I (i.e., a desire for this apple, this tree for shelter, etc.,) the self in *actuality* at this level is only a "natural," animal, or biological pre-self.

> Generally speaking, the I of Desire is an emptiness that receives a real positive content only by negating action that satisfies Desire in destroying, transforming, and "assimilating" the desired non-I. And the positive content of the I, constituted by negation, is a function of the positive content of the negated non-I. If, then, the Desire is directed toward a "natural" non-I, the I, too, will be "natural." The I created by the active satisfaction of such a Desire will have the same nature as the things toward which that Desire is directed: it will be a "thingish" I, a merely living I, an animal I.[53]

As situated by biological life then, the self is thus in part an expression of biological life. It begins as a part of nature. There is no self except in relation to the situating context of biological life.

Yet, there is another crucial element to the pre-self's experience: the self is never merely an expression or part of its situation, in this case, biological life. The desire of the pre-self is originally more than or qualitatively different from mere animal desire. It is also an indeterminate, non-natural yearning, a human desire.[54] Yet this should sound

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[51] *PhS., p. 113.*

[52] Hegel says this explicitly in *EL*, p. 211, sec. 140. That a "person *is* what he *does*," follows from the thesis of self-making, and is intelligible once one accepts that the self is not a "thing." The self, as self-making, *is* its self-making: it is, to paraphrase Hegel, nothing but the series of its acts.

[53] Kojeve, *Introduction*, p. 4.

[54] Both Kojeve and Fackenheim make this distinction between animal desire and human desire. See Kojeve, *Introduction*, p. 4-7, and Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 39-40.

paradoxical: how could a natural pre-self yearn for the non-natural? How could nature in-itself contain the seeds of its own transcendence? How could a pre-self be given to the world by nature, yet break with nature and deliver itself from "pre-selfhood?" In order to answer these questions, we must understand the relation between the three members of what Hegel calls the "absolute syllogism:" the logical Idea, Nature, and Spirit. For Hegel, nature--of which the pre-self is originally a part--is "the immediate totality" which dialectically "unfolds itself in the two extremes of logical Idea and Spirit."[55] For Hegel, nature does contain the seeds of its own transcendence, in the form of Spirit and the logical Idea. Thus, both the concrete human community of rationally self-making individuals (i.e. Spirit), and the absolute self-knowledge of this community (i.e. the logical Idea) presuppose this "unfolding" of the abstract immediacy of nature. Now, what this means is that the "immediate totality" of nature, precisely as an *immediate* totality, is already differentiated in-itself, but not for-itself, not mediated and made concrete and actual. In-itself, nature is abstractly differentiated in terms of nature, Spirit and the logical Idea. But such differentiation is only "true" or for-itself in so far as concrete, self-conscious selves, *actually do* "unfold" or emerge from out of nature. Hegel's thesis is that the natural pre-self experiences (as we have seen above) not only the animal desire for determinate natural satisfaction (i.e. this apple, this chicken), but eventually also the desire for an indeterminate, non-natural satisfaction. For Hegel, the pre-self is at once the unease of a fleeting contentment with natural things, and a nagging restlessness; the pre-self *is* immediate gratification and an unsettling craving or yearning. This uneasy experience of

[55] *EL.*, p. 263.

the natural pre-self is the most original manifestion of the differentiation inherent to nature as an "immediate totality,"and as such, it is the beginning of the unfolding of this immediate totality.

In order to see how this immediate totality unfolds, we must now demonstrate how the distinctively "human" desire emerges in the experience of the pre-self. As we shall see, it is this form of desire which finds determinate satisfaction only in an interhuman encounter.

As we have seen with the pre-self's experience as animal desire, the pre-self, like any animal, seeks satisfaction, but it immediately looks to what is "present at hand"--the natural "other"-- for this satisfaction. Like any other animal, its very being is as unstable and uncertain as the ongoing smorgasbord of natural objects it produces and negates. Like animals, it *is* the ongoing cycle of nature. The independence of these natural objects of consumption or negation is so fleeting and impermanent, that the experience of this pre-self is for the most part an unbroken stream of "feeling full" and "feeling hungry." As such, the animal-like pre-self is actualized as an expression of its situation, of nature.

However, the experience of this pre-self is never merely satiation, hunger, or whatever other natural or animal desire. The pre-self also experiences an indeterminate yearning or longing, what we have called human desire. *In* its experience as a natural, animal pre-self, this pre-self senses that for some reason (the pre-self cannot yet know this reason), natural satisfaction is somehow *not enough*. It eats, sleeps, fornicates, yet is nonetheless seized with an inexplicable restlessnes. For the pre-self, this sense of dissatisfaction is nothing more than a vague, lived feeling, but it is nonetheless one which,

because it cannot be remedied through natural means, *persists* as an unsettling and mysterious call from beyond. From beyond where, the pre-self does not fully comprehend. The pre-self merely lives this persistent and unsettling dissatisfaction with its mere natural existence. As Dostoyevsky's Grand Inquisitor says to Jesus:

> For the mystery of human life is not only in living, but in knowing why one lives. Without a clear idea of what to live for man will not consent to live and will rather destroy himself than remain on the earth, though he were surrounded by loaves of bread.[56]

Here, it is important to note the deep, existential sense of this dissatisfaction for the pre-self. As Dostoyevsky points out, this "agonizing anxiety"[57] is at the very root of the human condition. Because this dissatisfaction emerges in the course of the pre-self's experience, the pre-self is *seized or ruptured* in its very being by this dissatisfaction or mystery. As such, although the pre-self does not yet know how, the pre-self *is* the desire to dissolve and so be released from this dissatisfaction, to uncover and identify the mystery, and as a result, to be at ease and settled in its experience. In other words, although this is not yet explicit for the pre-self in its experience, the pre-self *is* the desire or yearning for its *own* serenity and unity with itself, in Hegel's language, the desire for "self-certainty." By "self-certainty," Hegel is not describing the abstract *solus ipse* of a worldless *ego cogito*. Rather, he is referring to the concrete, existential condition *experienced* by the situated pre-self described above. The desire for unity with itself, for actual self-certainty, is one which emerges as an existential response to the limitations

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[56]Fyodor Dostoyevsky, *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. By David Magarshack, (London: Penguin Books Ltd, 1958), p. 298.

[57]Ibid., p. 298.

imposed by natural situatedness. The pre-self's desire for actual self-certainty, for identity, is a longing for enduring peace with itself, for "knowing why one lives," and for the alleviation of anxiety about its homelessness in the world.

As Hegel shows, this vague desire cannot be satisfied through natural means. Indeed, it is this very condition which gave rise to the unease of the pre-self in the first place. Natural objects cannot provide recognition of self-certainty because their independence (and ability to objectively confirm or recognize the self as such) vanishes as they are annihilated and negated by the animal-like pre-self. Instead, Hegel thinks that self-certainty can only be recognized and made actual or "true" in the world, by an object which, in being negated by the pre-self, yet still remains independent and free, and thus preserved as a permanent confirmation of the self's actual self-certainty. In effect, such an object would have to freely grant the negating activity carried out by the pre-self. Or in other words, the object must effect the "negation within itself."[58] Yet, if not a natural object, what kind of object could do such a thing? Hegel's answer is this: another unsettled and dissatisfied object, another desirous pre-self. As he says, "*Self-consciousness achieves its satisfaction only in another self-consciousness.*"[59] Here, Hegel does not mean that two self-consciousnesses, already formed, encounter each other and then merely confirm their being as fully formed, independent self-consciousness. Hegel is more radical than that. Again, if one recalls that the *Phenomenology* is a story of absolute self-making, Hegel's point here is that the pre-self's moment of satisfaction in another pre-

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[58] *PhS.*, p. 109
[59] *PhS.*, p. 110.

self is simultaneously its actual emergence in the world as a self-certain self for the first time. There is no self-consciousness (i.e. selfhood) ready-made; rather, it makes itself--which means that it tears itself loose from the determination of nature--only in so far as such self-making is mediated by other pre-selves. This dependence upon the other human is crucial. To repeat Hegel's charactization of the beginning of selfhood:

> Self-consciousness exists in and for itself in and through the fact that it exists *in-and-for-itself-for-another*, that is, it exists only as a being acknowledged.[60]

It is important to recognize that this movement of self-consciousness is not merely the "action of *one* self-consciousness, but this action of the one has itself the double significance of being both its own action and the action of the other as well."[61] As Hegel continues,

> Each sees the *other* do the same as it does; each does itself what it demands of the other, and therefore also does what it does only in so far as the other does the same. Action by one side only would be useless because what is to happen can only be brought about by both.[62]

Described in the above manner, however, the interhuman encounter and the emergence of selfhood as "a being-acknowledged" is still abstract. That is, we have merely described the formal conditions which must be met if the unsettling "human"desire of the pre-self is to be satisfied or actualized in the world. The pre-self's desire for self-certainty can only be satisfied through actual recognition by and for another pre-self. This must be a reciprocal relation. What has not yet been shown, however, is exactly how this

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[60]*PhG.*, p. 141, *PhS.*, p. 111.
[61]*PhS.*, p. 111-112.
[62]*PhS.*, p. 112.

satisfaction comes about for actual pre-selves. In other words, it is necessary to consider the concrete manner in which each pre-self actually *struggles with the other* to gain recognition of self-certainty and so assert its own being over against nature.

For a moment, let us return to the desirous pre-self which is unsettled and ruptured by a yearning or longing which can find no determinate satisfaction in nature. It is situated by nature and still desires natural objects, but it is not "at home" or "at peace with itself" in nature. Such a pre-self merely wants its unease to end, and to feel comfortable or "at home" with itself. Now, imagine that there are two such desirous pre-selves which encounter one another. As such, each pre-self is at first for the other just another "thing" to be negated; "they are for one another like ordinary objects, *independent shapes*, individuals submerged in the being [or immediacy] of *Life*."[63] As such, "each is indeed certain of its own self, but not of the other, and therefore its own self-certainty still has no truth"[64] or actuality. They are not yet autonomous, self-making selves. But if the negation of natural objects cannot satisfy this desire for autonomy, what can? The only means of satisfying such a desire is by "the negation of another desire to negate nature as a whole,"[65] i.e. another pre-self. As Hegel says, the self's self-certainty "would have truth only if its own being-for-self had confronted it as an independent object, or, what is the same thing, if the object had presented itself as this pure self-certainty."[66] But this is *only* possible in the mutual *struggle* for recognition. That is, each pre-self both risks its life

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[63]*PhS.*, p. 113.
[64]*PhS.*, p. 113.
[65]Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 40.
[66]*PhS.*, p. 113.

(thereby negating all of nature) and "seeks the death of the other"[67] in a "life and death struggle."[68] As Hegel says,

> They must engage in this struggle, for they must raise their certainty of being *for themselves* to truth, both in the case of the other and in their own case. And it is only through staking one's life that freedom is won; only thus is it proved that for self-consciousness, its essential being is not [just] being, not the *immediate* form in which it appears, not its submergence in the expanse of life, but rather that there is nothing present in it which could not be regarded as a vanishing moment, that it is only pure *being-for-self*.[69]

For Hegel, it is crucial to this primitive form of recognition that each pre-self *both* stake its life, *and* seek the death of the other. By staking its life, each concretely and in actuality affirms its desire for a non-natural object (i.e. its unity with itself or self-certainty), and thereby transcends nature. Each attempts to be his or her own "master" by transcending their dependency on life or nature. But as a primitive, pre-self, it also must seek the death of the other. Why? The pre-self in its animal-like immediacy is at first practically a solipsist. Though the pre-self is seized by an indeterminate longing, in its actual existence it nonetheless still assumes its animal existence to be all that is actual. It has a vague feeling of self-certainty, but it is not in actuality self-certain. That is why the pre-self is seized by a longing. It longs (though it does not know it) to legitimate or concretely actualize its self-certainty, its unity or identity with itself. But it has not yet encountered any determinate satisfaction for this longing in its primitive existence. But then another pre-self appears on the scene (remember, of course, that this is a *double movement*, i.e., it appears this way for both pre-selves). In a sense, this appearance of

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[67] *PhS.*, p. 113.
[68] *PhS.* p. 114.
[69] *PhS.* p. 114.

"the other" shatters the solipsistic world of each pre-self. Each pre-self robs the other of its immediate and vague self-certainty, which is to say that each self has "lost itself" in the other. Each self *recognizes itself* in the independent being of the *other*. As such, what each self *recognizes* is both its own "othered being," as well as the independent being of the other which holds each self's "otherness" captive, so to speak. Each self's "essential being is present to it in the form of an `other', it is outside of itself and must rid itself of its self-externality."[70] Each pre-self must therefore win itself back or "supersede this otherness of itself."[71] But because this "otherness of itself" only arises in so far as there is an independent other, the self can only win *itself* back by seeking the elimination or death of that independent other. Thus, in so far as the self *both* stakes its own life *and* "wins itself back" at all, thereby actualizing and affirming its self-certainty, there must necessarily be an "other" against which to actually stake its own life, and from which to win itself back. The presence of other selves *as* others--albeit a primitive form of mutual recognition--is absolutely essential to the emergence of autonomous selfhood. Thus, as Fackenheim notes, "even in its pristine origins the human self is dependent for selfhood on other selves. It is *one* dependence which it will never transcend."[72] Each self originally becomes a self through the life and death struggle, a struggle which essentially *is* a process of mutual recognition. Here then, concretely and for the first time, is the emergence of selfhood.

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[70]*PhS.*, p. 114.
[71]*PhS.*, p. 111.
[72]Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 40.

C. From Mutual Recognition to Abstract Freedom: The Dialectic of Master and Slave

While both moments of recognition--staking one's life, and seeking the death of the other--are necessary for the emergence of selfhood, it tragically turns out that they also signal the end of genuine selfhood. In particular, it is the seeking of the death of the other which does away "with the certainty of self generally,"[73] a certainty which is momentarily achieved by the mutual risking of life. It is important to recall the comportment of the "animal-like" pre-self in order to grasp this point. There, paradoxically, the pre-self, in destroying objects of nature, annihilated that from which it desired recognition of its self-certainty. The result of such comportment was the unsettling experience of an indeterminate longing. Here, the pre-self had not yet learned that its self-certainty depends upon its recognition by an other human and that such recognition *depends for its maintainance upon the preservation of that which does the recognizing*: the other human *as an independent `other.'*[74] In killing the other, the primitive but genuine selfhood achieved in the staking of life vanishes. As such, the

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[73]*PhS.*, p. 114.

[74]*PhS.*, p. 114. Hegel's point here is that recognition requires *determinite negation*, not the abstract negation involved in death. The kind of negation required is one "which supersedes in such a way as to preserve and maintain what is superseded, and consequently survives its own supersession." (pp. 114-115). Recognition is necessarily reciprocal, and although each self wins itself back from the other, the other must necessarily still be preserved in its otherness in order for recognition--and hence genuine selfhood--to be maintained. What must be superseded is the self's self-externality, not the other itself. This can happen only if each self lets the other's "self-externality" go free.(See *PhS.*, p. 111). It is precisely the struggle to the death which belies such reciprical releasement.

moments of the "self's selfhood are short-lived.[75] The selfhood achieved through the mutual recognition of the life and death struggle would then seem to be a failure. As Fackenheim notes:

> In the actual combat there is mutual recognition and through it self-recognition. Both vanish when the combat is ended. The slain can neither recognize nor be recognized. And the surviving victor is a *mere* survivor once the flush of the moment of victory has passed. If incapable of rising above so primitive a selfhood, the self would forever alternate, like some barbaric prehistoric Faust, between actual battles in which selfhood is achieved and times between battles in which selfhood, having been lost without result, would be dissolved into a dark longing for renewed battle.[76]

According to Hegel, however, it is possible for the incipient selves to rise above this primitive level of selfhood. But there is a condition: one self must be "the independent consciousness whose essential nature is to be for itself," and the other must be "the dependent consciousness whose essential nature is simply to live or to be for another. The former is the lord, the other is the bondsman."[77] Initially, then, human selfhood can only be maintained in the form of an unequal and one-sided relation.[78] So begins the famous master-slave parable.

The "failure" of the life and death struggle then, is not in vain. The interhuman recognition which was so crucial to the emergence of selfhood survives in the master-slave parable, albeit in a one-sided form.

> The killer of the foe gives way to the master of the slave; the self which *is* a risking of life not surviving the act of risk, to a self which *has* risked life

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[75]Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 41.
[76] Ibid, p. 41.
[77]*PhS.*, p. 115.
[78]*PhS.*, p. 116.

and *is* this having-risked.[79]

For our purposes, what is crucial about this dialectic between master and slave, is the notion that this one-sided form of recognition undergoes an inversion, whereby it is the working slave, not the master, who first achieves free or autonmous selfhood, or who first becomes "explicitly *for itself*."[80] Put simply, free selfhood does not come ready-made, but rather, as we have seen, it must work and struggle to make itself. This is precisely what the slave does. Let us briefly see how this occurs.

First, we must consider the master. Essentially the existence of the master is tragic.[81] As the victor of the battle, the master is recognized by the slave as a master, and as such, a"free," self-making self. The master uses, or better, *needs* the slave for two purposes. First, to be recognized as the autonomous master who has risked his life for actual self-certainty, the master needs the recognition of another human being, in this case, the slave. The master desires the desire of another. Secondly, in order to assert his mastery over the independence of nature--and so treat it as dependent--the master must pose the slave between himself and nature by forcing the slave to work on nature and fashion objects for the master's enjoyment.[82] In other words, the master "needs a slave to dominate and a nature to enjoy."[83] What is so tragic about the master's existence, however, is that the master is "recognized by someone whom he does not recognize."[84] In

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[79]Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 41.
[80]*PhS.*, p. 119.
[81]Kojeve, *Introduction*, p. 19.
[82]*PhS.*, p. 116.
[83]Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 42.
[84]Kojeve, *Introduction*, p. 19.

the battle, what the master sought was to be recognized not by an impermanent "thing" of nature, but by an independent object "worthy of recognizing him."[85] But as "master," the master can only be recognized as such by the `other' which he has made his slave. Yet because this slave, in clinging to life, is itself recognized as "unessential" or as a "thing," it is in principle not worthy of recognizing the master. Paradoxically, however, the master depends upon the slave for recognition. What this means is that the master's desire for the recognition of his self-certainty shall never be satisfied or actualized because he seeks such recognition in an "empty" object. The master's self-certainty or "freedom," if it amounts to anything at all in the actual world, is either like the worldless and self-enclosed "freedom" of the stoic, or the quixotic adventures of a dreamer. So much then for the master.

If mastery is a dead end, what can be said about servitude? As we have seen, the master emerges from the life and death struggle and, in dominating the slave, assumes immediate, ready-made autonomy. But because the only recognition of this autonomy comes from a being not worthy of giving such recognition, the master's autonomy is abstract and hollow. If the *Phenomenology of Spirit* wanted to locate the origins of *actual* human freedom or concrete self-making, it is not found in such abstract, stoic mastery. Rather, it may be found in the path of servitude, "the true path of human liberation."[86] As Hegel says, "the *truth* of the independent consciousness is accordingly the

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[85] Ibid, p. 19.

[86] Jean Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure of Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans., by Samuel Cherniak and John Heckman, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1974), p. 174n.7.

servile consciousness of the bondsman."[87] Let us then consider the path of servitude.

Thus far, we have only examined the master-slave relation from the master's point of view. But in order to understand how freedom or independence is made actual by the slave, it is also necessary to consider the slave as a self-consciousness "in and for itself."[88] We must consider the master-slave relation from the slave's point of view. According to Hyppolite, the slave's actualization of independence (i.e. freedom) occurs in three moments of the slave's experience: *"fear, service,* and *labour."*[89] In order to understand the experience of slavery, and its transition to autonomous self-making, it will be helpful to consider these three moments.

Initially, the slave "has the lord for its essential reality."[90] The slave's ideal is something which the slave assumes to be *outside* his own being. What precisely is this ideal or *truth*? It is the "independent consciousness that is *for itself*."[91] However, what "we," the phenomenological observers of consciousness know--and what the slave does not know--is that the "truth" of independent consciousness is *implicit* in the slave itself.[92] For Hegel, what is essential to the independence of self-consciousness, is "the absolute melting away of everything stable" or the moment of "absolute negativity, *pure being-for-self.*"[93] It is precisely this moment which is implicit in the slave as a result of the life and death struggle. The master, having raised himself above the expanse of life and the fear of

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[87] *PhS.*, p. 117.
[88] *PhS.*, p. 117.
[89] Hyppolite, *Genesis and* Structure, p. 174.
[90] *PhS.*, p. 117.
[91] *PhS.*, p. 117.
[92] *PhS.*, p. 117.
[93] *PhS.*, p. 117.

death in the battle, is immediate being-for-self. The slave, however, emerged from the battle as "fear of death, the absolute Lord."[94] In this fear of death, the slave did not fear this or that thing of nature, but "its whole being has been seized with dread."[95] It is precisely through this fear that the slave first comes to recognize himself as a being-for-self distinct from the expanse of life. As Hyppolite notes,

> Human consciousness can take shape only through this anguish throughout the whole of its being. At that point, specific attachments, the dispersion of life in more or less stable forms, disappear, and in that fear man becomes cognizant of the totality of his being, a totality never given as such in organic life.[96]

Through the anguish involved in the fear of death, the slave "has trembled in every fibre of its being, and everything solid and stable has been shaken to its foundations."[97] It is this moment of "absolute negativity" which is the truth or "essential nature of self-consciousness," a nature which is implicit in the slave through its fear of death.

However, such a truth is empty if it is merely implicit; the implicit truth of the slave must be *made actual*--and so explicit--by the slave through work. "Through work," says Hegel, "the bondsman becomes conscious of what he truly is."[98] It is in the service of the master that the slave first labours or works at all. At first, out of fear, the slave merely serves the master, shaping and forming nature into objects for the master's enjoyment. As such, for the slave, its work appears to be external to it. The slave's being as "worker" is

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[94]*PhS.*, p. 117.
[95]*PhS.*, p. 117.
[96]Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 175.
[97]*PhS.*, p. 117.
[98]*PhS.*, p. 118.

for the master. Yet it is precisely through the "discipline of service and obedience"[99] that the slave becomes detached from nature [100] and *for itself*. The master, who desires recognition from an independent being, only achieves an immediate and fleeting satisfaction because he in fact gets "recognition" from a dependent being. The slave also desires recognition from an independent being, but this desire is satisfied *mediately*, by in effect *making* a permanent, independent being or object through the transformative activity of his own work. Accordingly, the slave "comes to see in the independent being [of the object] its *own* independence."[101] By shaping and forming nature, the slave negates "the alien being before which it has trembled," and as such, "becomes *for himself*, someone existing on his own account." [102] Most importantly, the slave achieves freedom or autonomy in the form of *thought*.

> Through this rediscovery of himself by himself, the bondsman realizes that it is precisely in his work wherein he seemed to have only an alienated existence that he acquires *a mind of his own*.[103]

It is important to recognize that the slave's self-discovery is the first and most *abstract* appearance of genuine autonomous self-making or independence in the *Phenomenology*. Through a dialectic of self-making, the slave both autonomously makes itself and its world. As such, it no longer thinks of the world as a threatening and alien 'other,' but rationally begins to find *itself* in the world. The self identifies with a world. In thought, there is no separation between the self's being-for-itself and the being-in-itself

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[99] *PhS*., p. 119.
[100] Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 175.
[101] *PhS*., p. 118.
[102] *PhS*., p. 118.
[103] *PhS*., pp. 118-119. My emphasis.

of the `other.' In thought, the self overcomes otherness.

> In thinking, I *am free*, because I am not in an *other*, but remain simply and solely in communion with myself, and the object, which is for me the *essential* being, is in undivided unity my being-for-myself, and my activty in conceptual thinking is a movement within myself. It is essential, however, in thus characterizing this shape of self-consciousness to bear firmly in mind that it is *thinking* consciousness *in general*, that its object is an *immediate* unify of *being-in-itself* and *being-for-itself*.[104]

It is this "shape" of consciousness which appears in history as the stoic, a self who is free or for-itself insofar as it thinks itself to be free, but who in fact is only free in an abstract and empty sense. The freedom of the stoic is a one-sided freedom because, in thought, it asserts its freedom quite irrespective of the finite situation within which the self labours to first of all actualize such freedom. The stoic's freedom, a freedom which is the result of the master-slave parable, is a freedom only in thought, but this thought (i.e. the self *immediately* seeing itself as all actuality) "is still an abstract thought,"and so "not an actual and living freedom."[105] The freedom of the stoic is a worldless, empty freedom.

> The Stoic's free thought is achieved, not by conquest of the natural and human worlds, but rather by means of a flight from both.[106]

Although Hegel's account of selfhood continues beyond stoicism, to skepticism and the unhappy consciousness, it shall not be our task here to examine this progression. Rather, it is enough to make the point that the original account of selfhood--an account contained in the life and death struggle and the master-slave parable--is not an adequate account of the *whole story* of selfhood, as Kojeve thought. It is crucial that one

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[104]*PhS.*, p. 120.
[105]Hyppolite, *Genesis and Structure*, p. 177.
[106]Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 44.

understand that the "autonomy" realized by the slave, though a significant moment in the overall dialectic of autonomous self-making, is not adequate by itself because it is only abstract. The self must pass though many other "shapes," finite experiences, and forms of otherness before it actually and concretely realizes freedom, or what is the same thing, its own rational self-determination and absolute self-recognition.

This point, however, poses a problem. One may ask why Hegel, having shown how autonomous selfhood first comes on the scene, then goes to show how such "autonomy" is one-sided and empty? Why does Hegel give an account of the interhuman origin of autonomous selfhood, only then to show how that account fails to truly realize such autonomous selfhood? Is Hegel's interhuman account of selfhood, and so his concern with the other human, merely "left behind" in such a failure, or is it recognized and preserved at another point in the story of absolute self-making?

For Hegel, in being overcome, the interhuman origin of selfhood is not wholly "left behind," rather it is transcended and preserved, but in a more concrete form, in the reconciliation of Subjective and Objective Spirit, in *Absolute Spirit* or transcending absolute thought. As we noted earlier, Hegel's account of the interhuman origin of selfhood is a logical and abstract account. Such a primitive notion of the interhuman encounter serves the purpose of showing what must *ontologically* be the case if absolute self-making or absolute self-recognition is to emerge at all. Hegel's point in providing this account was to show--albeit in an abstract and formal manner--the "truth" that our existence in a community, city, or state--where we always already are--is not fundamentally as atomistic, isolated individuals or subjects, but as selves whose very *being*

presupposes a reciprocal recognition of and from other actual, rationally self-making selves. However, what is important to recognize here is that Hegel's account of self and other does not merely consist of the abstract, ideal-typical insights of the life and death struggle and the master-slave parable; rather, it ultimately involves an overcoming of these finite, conflictual moments of selfhood through a recognition of their one-sidedness and finite abstraction, an abstraction which, as was evident with master and slave, inevitabley leads to the will to dominate others. Ultimately this recognition comes in the form of absolute thought. But for Hegel, this recognition in absolute thought is only possible if, in the actual world, the dominating abstraction of these finite moments has *already been rationally overcome and reconciled in and through the history of rational self-making*. In the "Spirit" of the modern world, such reconciliation appears in the form of a modern state and a Constitution which embodies the principle of human freedom. The task for absolute thought then is to make explicit the absolute story of this reconciliation, and to thereby make explicit the rational reconciliation of self and other which *is* our actuality. It is only in terms of this "absolute story"--comprehended by absolute thought--that the mutual dependency between selfhood and other humans--i.e. spirit--is finally overcome and thereby recognized; in such recognition, the other human is not *ultimately* recognized in her isolation from, or *particular* difference from, the self, but rather, as another *autonomously self-making self* who shares a rational world with oneself. Though particular human differences are not forgotten or obliterated in Hegel's account, in themselves they are not recognized as the truth of the other's selfhood. Rather, because human differences are largely tied to the self's contingent situation, what is philosophically

important is the recognition in absolute thought, of the whole being of the other as a situated, rational self-making, a whole being within which contingent, particular human differences first come to be meaningful *as* particular differences. It is thus not in *merely* recognizing the other's particular differences, but rather, in recognizing the other's essentially human *identity* as situated, rational self-making in a shared world, that the self thereby "does justice" to the particular, contingent differences which enter into the whole of that "other's" own self-making. Ultimately for Hegel, the absolute self recognizes the other *human*, not merely the human *other*. For Hegel, such recognition only appears in the form of absolute thought. It is to this notion of absolute thought and its recognition of the other human--not merely the human *other* in her particular difference--that we shall now turn.

Absolute Thought and the Recognition of the other Human

In order to understand the sense of Hegel's recognition of the other human in the identity of absolute thought or spirit--an I that is We and We that is I--it is necessary to recall Hegel's overall project of absolute self-making or self-recognition in the *Phenomenology*. Hegel's thesis concerning selfhood is that it is only as a *transcendence* (i.e. absolute self-recognition) of the finitude and contingent limitations of interhuman, spiritual life that the essential significance of our existence with others may be recognized and preserved. It is only by transcending the abstract domination of others that occurs in the life and death struggle and one-sided master/slave conflicts, that one may truly and

genuinely recognize others in their integral being as rational self-making.

Hegel's project in the *Phenomenology* is to show how the self (or Reason), in order to be actual as absolute self-making, must *recognize* itself, not from just any finite or limited perspective, but from a transcendent perspective, to be all that is actual in the world, or what is the same thing, that the world *is* the product of the self's rational self-making, *is* Reason. For Hegel, this level of *absolute self-recognition* is crucial. Hegel thought that the self can only recognize itself as being genuinely autonomous or independent (what it has desired all along) by first of all recognizing or comprehending the way in which *it makes itself independent in relation to otherness or difference*. The self is absolutely *self*-making, not the mere product or captive of otherness and particularity. But such recognition is possible only from an absolute perspective which transcends the contingency and limitations of the finite world. Indeed, for Hegel, if absolute self-recognition is the goal, such recognition *must* be that which transcends the limitations of the finite world, or else, as we have already seen with the very origins of selfhood, the self will always be frustrated, continually losing itself in, and so dominating the other. For Hegel, the story of selfhood is one of an absolute homecoming, whereby the self, having returned from the apparent otherness and difference of every unknown land, sits comfortably at home, and in solitude, recollects the essential significance of such a journey for her whole being or identity as rationally self-making in a rational world. In such recollection, both the *self's* journey and the lands through which the self has journeyed (including others), constitute a unified whole or identity, what Hegel calls Reason or the

"absolute Idea."[107].

What this means is that it is only at the transcendent level of absolute self-recognition, or absolute thought, that the self's essential relation with other selves is given its full meaning and so *preserved*. It is at the level of absolute thought that the self recognizes that she, as well as others, are not the abstract, possessive individuals of the Enlightenment, but rather, historically and interhumanly situated selves who mutually depend upon each other for their very being as rational self-making. It is at this level of thought that one thus recognizes the abstraction and ultimate irrationality of considering others with isolated indifference, and the futility of dominating others in a manner similar to that of the tragic "master." Only in the name of the absolute self-recognition of absolute thought is the other human recognized or redeemed. In turn, it is only through the recognition of the other human that particular human differences may be "given their due." Let us see how this is the case.

At the level of absolute thought, the self at once "clears away," "cancels," or overcomes all otherness (i.e. it is now more-than-self), *and* it also preserves or "overreaches" [*ubergreifen*] all otherness. At the level of absolute self-recognition, a point towards which the whole dialectic of self-making in the *Phenomenology* leads, the self, in thought, realizes a comprehensive recognition of "the whole," of the *absolute identity* of identity and difference, an identity which the self, as absolute, *is*. Here it is

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[107]*EL*, p. 304. Hegel uses an interesting example to illustrate the meaning of the absolute Idea. He says, "the absolute Idea is to be compared with the old man who utters the same religious statements as the child, but for whom they carry the significance of his whole life. Even if the child understands the religious content, it still counts for him only as something outside of which lie the whole of life and the whole world."

crucial to note Hegel's sense of such comprehensive thought. In such thought, all previous forms of otherness--including human differences--are transcended and are *aufgehoben* by the self-made self. It is important to recognize the double sense of this process of *Aufhebung*. As Hegel says of this notion,

> On the one hand, we understand it to mean "clear away" or "cancel," and in that sense we say that a law or regulation is cancelled (*aufgehoben*). But the word also means "to preserve," and we say in this sense that something is well taken care of (*wohl aufgehoben*).[108]

In terms of our concern with what is at stake in philosophically "doing justice" to the difference of the other human, this double conception of absolute knowledge is crucial. The self of absolute self-recognition only is such a self if it both emerges from yet transcends or cancels all otherness. Thus, on the one hand, as engaged in the solitary "step back" of absolute philosophic thought itself, the self is absolutely for-itself, or *is* in its very being, self-thinking thought--which means that it recognizes itself in all actuality--and all otherness and difference is finally meaningful in terms of the rational "sense of it all." This means that selfhood is never merely the finite, anthropological condition of intersubjectivity, as Kojeve thought. For Hegel, as absolute self-making, the self reaches an infinite form of thought, and is thereby able to comprehend its finite, interhuman existence with *other* absolutely self-making beings. In such thought, free from finite prejudices and differences, the self does not *merely* recognize the other human in her specific differences, differences which change in the context of that other's rational, historically situated self-making; nor, as absolute and rational, does the self truly

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[108] *EL*, p. 154, paragraph 96.

understand *itself* merely in terms of *its* particular differences from others. Though we can and do remain on this level of particularity and difference, for Hegel, to fail to transcend this level and recognize ourselves and the other human in terms of our identity as rational self-making, is to succumb to irrationality. For Hegel, such irrational attachments to finite human differences inevitably give rise to domination and conflicts because each self, unable to comprehend the identity both of itself and the other as a whole, asserts its finite particularity over against all other particularity. We saw this form of domination in the master/slave parable, the overcoming of which only occurs at the level of absolute thought. For Hegel, then, selfhood must transcend human finitude by climbing the "ladder"[109] to absolute thought, a ladder which itself is provided by finite human existence; as such, the self may realize an infinite and universal form of thought which *incorporates* all such finite standpoints into an absolute identity. As this self-thinking thought, the self *is* transcendence, now more than "self." At this level, "there is no such thing as Jew and Greek, slave and freeman, male and female..."(Galatians 3:28).[110] One transcends finitude and comprehends the identity of "the whole." This points to the other element of absolute thought, that of preservation *in* transcendence.

The transcendent thought which the self *is* at the level of absolute self-recognition is not an indeterminate abyss, an abstract "night in which ...all cows are black."[111] As comprehensive of the determinate content of all essential forms of human experience,

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[109]*PhS.*, p. 14.

[110]*The New English Bible*, (Oxford University Press, Cambridge University Press, 1970), p. 242.

[111]*PhS.*, p. 9.

particular human differences included, such thought for Hegel does not merely obliterate all otherness and difference, reducing it to an instrumental moment in a one-sided subjective idealism, will to dominate, or empty identity. Rather, such thought "overgrasps" all finite moments of self-making and in so doing, incorporates such realities into a rational, "concrete whole," within which such realities--including finite human differences--are meaningful. In this way, particular human differences and otherness are given their due in terms of being "well taken care of," or "put in their proper place" with respect to "the whole." H.S. Harris and T.F. Geraets allude to a metaphor of Zeno's in order to clarify this aspect of absolute thought:

> Zeno used the five fingers to represent the differing "apprehensions" of the five senses; then, closing his fist, he called that gesture "comprehensive sensation." To express the comprehensive power of thought, he grasped the closed fist in his other hand.[112]

In the dialectic of absolute self-making, the self passes through many finite and different shapes or moments, the most original being that of the encounter with the other human. To be sure, in its finite existence the self is always situated in a contingent, interhuman world, what Hegel calls "objectice spirit." It exists as a pragmatically engaged being, who, along with others, attempts to control the contingent realities of the "workaday week."[113] But it is crucial to point out that for Hegel, the rational self-making process is an *infinite* process, a process which, while it emerges from the finite realities of its contingent existence, yet in the philosophical, all-comprehensive "step back,"

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[112]H.S. Harris and T.F. Geraets in "Introduction: Translating Hegel's Logic," in Hegel, *EL*, p. xxvi.

[113]Fackenheim, *The Religious Dimension*, p. 68.

transcends such finitude and difference by "overgrasping" or "overreaching" it and rendering it meaningful *in the context of the rational, infinite totality*. This means that, for Hegel, thought is never merely limited to the narrow and finite standpoints of human existence (for example, one's particular difference from others), nor is it merely an abstract and infinite thought which has taken flight from the world. Rather, it is the infinite unity of the finite and the infinite, of identity and difference, in such a way that the different, finite realities of actual human existence are only given their full significance--or redeemed--by being understood in the context of the rational whole, of absolute, infinite thought. As Fackenheim aptly puts it:

> Hegel rejects, as mere escapism, all attempts to deny the struggle between the finite and infinite poles of selfhood: both the escape into an empty mysticism of a simply infinite Thought, and the escape into a simply finite thought supposedly devoid of all transcendence. If nevertheless he does not remain with a self-destructive struggle, it is because the infinite *overreaches* the finite pole. The concrete philosophic thought is the perpetually reenacted raising of the finite to the infinite which, while raising the finite without remainder, must yet in so doing affirm its persistence *as* finite, lest its own activity of raising reduce itself to a mere lifeless transcendence. *According to Hegel, philosophy is the Sunday of life. But there can be no Sunday unless, first, the workaday week is a reality; and unless secondly, instead of there being a meaningless alternation between work and rest, Sunday is the meaning and truth of the whole.*[114]

What does this view then mean for our concern with philosophically understanding and recognizing human differences? We have seen how the interhuman encounter as the life and death struggle is the most original moment of absolute self-making, a moment which is characterized by violence and domination of the other. Selfhood presupposes an actual, though conflictual encounter with another self. However, in the Spirit of the

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[114]Ibid, p. 99.

modern era, with the realization of the principle of freedom as embodied in the Constitution of a modern state, this interhuman origin of selfhood is both transcended and preserved. In the modern recognition of the unconditioned worth of each individual, the primitive domination of the life and death struggle and the master-slave relation is *transcended*, while what is *preserved* is the recognition of the other human as essentially not a "thing" or object of domination, but that upon which the being of any human selfhood depends, i.e. an independent, rational self-making. For Hegel, this truth of selfhood is *absolutely recognized and legitimated* for the self-made self at the level of art, religion, and philosophy or thought thinking itself. With absolute self-recognition--the "culminating form of spirit,"[115] and indeed the whole dialectic of self-making--finite standpoints, such as actual relations, and so differences between selves, are not merely dissolved in the infinite's return to itself; rather, for Hegel, they are both transcended and preserved in the recognition of the absolute identity of identity and difference. Particular human differences are transcended and do not enter into the constitution of the self on the "Sunday of life,"for there, "you are all one person..." (Galatians 3:28).[116] At this level, the self *is* absolute self-recognition or self-thinking thought, and as such is not limited by *any* form of otherness, including its own particular differences or that of other selves. But this means that one need not be threatened by and dominate other selves, for ultimately, as the realization of Reason in the world, we "are all one person" or identity: absolute self-making. As we saw with the pre-self, selfhood is in its very origins seized by the desire to

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[115]Ibid, p. 98.
[116]*The New English Bible*, p. 242.

be at peace with itself, and like Odysseus, to return "home" to itself from otherness, including other selves. Selfhood desires to see its own self in all actuality, and all actuality in itself. It is this desire which moves the primitive self to abstractly dominate, and so seek to overcome others. Such a desire is finally satisfied only as an *absolutely mediated self-recognition*, which, while it emerges from the failures of all preceding, finite attempts at recognition, yet transcends this finitude, and in so doing, preserves it in absolute thought. Precisely because such thought cannot be separated from its actual genesis, nor from the *determinate and actual content* of its genesis, including human differences, such thought preserves the otherness or difference of the other in terms of the *identity* of absolute self-recognition. It is crucial to note, however, that in this transcendent, thinking preservation, one finally *does* genuinely recognize the other, not as a finite threat to one's selfhood, who, in her particular difference, must be dominated, nor as merely another nameless "isolated subject," but as another *rational self-making being* who shares a common, rational, worldly context with oneself.

Ultimately, what this means is that, for Hegel, if our concern is with understanding and recognizing human differences, it is only rational for us to recognize the *absolute identity* or englobing context within which the mere particularity of difference, *by itself* is but a finite, and so ultimately irrational standpoint. This point is crucial. For Hegel, this absolute identity, or absolute spirit, is noneother than the self-recognition of the historical totality of human rational self-making. Thus paradoxically, in order to genuinely recognize human differences, and so overcome both domination and the indifference of abstract individualism, one must be able to transcend those differences in absolute, philosophical

thought, and see them *as* finite and contingent differences or standpoints within "the whole" context of a rationally constituted, essentially shared world. For Hegel, what is thus of primary significance for philosophically doing justice to human differences, is the recognition of the *identity* of this intelligible, historicaly realized "whole," and not merely the attachment to finite, particular, and so abstract differences between human beings. What is essential for Hegel--and so for philosophical thought--is the redemption of ourselves through the recognition of the historical realization of our common humanity as *absolute and rational self-making*, not merely the particular differences within such rational self-making. In philosophical thought, the self recognizes not merely the human *other*, but more fundamentally, the other *human* (i.e. another rational self-making).

Chapter 2: Heidegger on the Self and Other

Introduction

Just as we have explicated the intelligibility and defensibility of Hegel's phenomenological account of selfhood on its own terms, so too shall we do so with Heidegger's account. The present chapter will deal with this task by closely following Heidegger's account of self and other in *Being and Time*.[1] It will be shown that, as a critic of abstract Enlightenment thinking and modern, atomistic subjectivity, Heidegger wants to awaken the possibility of taking a "step back" from our ordinary affairs in the world to realize a more original "thoughtfulness" concerning our finite comportment in a world with others. Such thoughtfulness, in Heidegger's view, would do justice to finite human differences *as* differences. As such, this thoughtfulness might preclude the Enlightenment tendency to dominate and control others, as well as the equally "thoughtless" tendency to be concerned only with our own self-interest, a concern which too often manifests itself in an indifference concerning the welfare of others. In Heidegger's view, it was the metaphysical tradition before him which, in its love affair with infinite, unconditional universality, had forgotten such finite thoughtfulness and as a result, in terms of self and other, embodied the most extreme form of both the will to dominate others, as well as a self-centered indifference towards others. In Heidegger's view, Hegel's philosophy, and by implication, Hegel's account of self and other, is

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[1]Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans., by John Macquarrie & Edward Robinson, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, Incorporated, 1962), and *Sein und Zeit*, (Tubingen: Max Niemayer Verlag, 1977). Hereafter cited as *BT* and *SZ* respectively.

paradigmatic of this metaphysical "thoughtlessness." In Heidegger's view, the task of philosophy is to recover the finitude which the Hegelian Absolute actually left unthought. It is this task to which Heidegger's own thinking, in all of his work, is devoted. It is ultimately within this context that one must understand Heidegger's account of self and other in *Being and Time*.

The explication in this chapter unfolds in three stages. First, I briefly lay out a preliminary[2] conception of Heidegger's account of self and other. Secondly, I attempt to unpack the intelligibility of this preliminary account, first, by situating it within the overall project of *Being and Time*, and secondly, by explicating the sections of *Being and Time* (sections 25-26) which specifically refer to the self/other relation. Thirdly, in order to examine the defensibility of Heidegger's account, I shall attempt to answer the following question: If Heidegger's "thoughtfullness" concerning our comportment with others is more "original" than that of the metaphysical tradition before him, then in what sense does such thoughtfulness avoid the will to dominate and control others, as well as the self-centered tendency to be indifferent concerning others? As we shall see, Heidegger's claim is that by opening ourselves to the thinking of the "ontological difference," to the finite transcendence which we always already *are*, we may, rather than thoughtlessly dominate or be indifferent towards others through the abstract, metaphysical will to absolute self-possession, become aware of the full range of our "indebtedness" for everything, including

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[2]It is preliminary in the sense that it is abstract and as yet not fully explicated in terms of its ultimate intelligibility and defensibility, a requirement which can only be met by providing a close reading of Heidegger's text, *Being and Time*. Here, I begin my explication of his account in a dogmatic and preliminary way so that it may serve as a springboard for further explication and inquiry.

the being of others, which *always already* pertains to our being. Instead of willfully and preemptively obliterating human difference in the name of abstract identity, we may thoughtfully "step back," and through a "thinking that is not a willing,"[3] prepare ourselves for a readiness to genuinely hear, and so recognize the voice of the other in her difference. It is only in silently thinking the full import of one's ineradicable indebtedness to the being of others, that one may be thoughtfully prepared for the possibility of dwelling in a way which does not obliterate the *unique individuality* of those others through the abstract will to dominate and its concomitant mode of indifference. Beyond such thoughtful readiness, however, what one *actually* does in the world with others is always open-ended, and so always involves an existential "leap of faith" where, technologically enframed as we always are, we are in a tragic sense likely to once again willfully dominate others. It is for this reason that, beyond the recognition of human differences in the silent preparedness of a "thinking that is not a willing," Heidegger thinks that "only a god can save us." The possibility of the genuine recognition of finite human differences thus lies in a *Denken* which is receptive to the appearance of this god.

A Preliminary Conception

In his 1927 work, *Being and Time (Sein und Zeit)*, Heidegger provides an account of self and other which he takes to be more ontologically "original" than Hegel's account. While Heidegger agreed with Hegel that the self is a self-making,[4] he took his account of

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[3]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. II, *Willing*, p. 178.

[4]*BT*., p. 345., *SZ*., p. 298. Heidegger's version of this thesis is: "The essence of Dasein as an entity is its existence."

self-making to be more original than Hegel's in that, not only is Heideggerian self-making radically finite, but the fundamental activity of this "making" is one of *interpretation*, and not, as Hegel thought, rational or absolute self-determination. For Heidegger, "rational self-determination" first of all presupposes an englobing interpretive horizon within which it is merely *one* possibility among many different finite possibilities. On this view, "human freedom" has nothing to do with the overcoming of all otherness--including other selves--through an account of rational self-making, where all essential forms of experience, including one's being with others, is subsumed in an *absolute identity*. For Heidegger, because we are radically finite and not essentially rational self-making, human freedom is not equated with the realization of a transcendent reason or absolute identity (i.e. absolute self-making) in the world, as it is with Hegel. Nor is freedom for Heidegger to be equated with that of the isolated and "free-floating subjects" [*freischwebende Subjekte*][5] of the Enlightenment. Rather, for Heidegger, freedom is the ontological possibility of resolutely accepting (or not accepting) *one's own* indebtedness [*Verschuldung*][6] for the finite historical situatedness--both ontological and ontic--into which she is always already "thrown," and the particular projections she makes on the basis of that situatedness. For

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[5]*BT*, p. 160, *SZ*, p. 123.

[6]*BT*, p. 329, *SZ*, p. 284. The word *Verschuldung* is a derivative of *Schuld*, a word which for Heidegger essentially refers to the "primordial Being-guilty"[*urspruenglichen Schuldigseins*] which is ontologically constitutive of our very being. For Heidegger, one is in her very being, "indebted" to and responsible for the hermeneutic situation and the ontic conditions into which she is always already "thrown," as well as the particular projections one makes on the basis of that situation and its ontic conditions. For Heidegger, what is philosophically important is that one become explicitly aware of this individual, primordial indebtedness, and as a result, be more thoughtful concerning one's own ontological and ontic situatedness in a world with others.

Heidegger, this means taking responsibility for *oneself* and the full range of that which both situates one's selfhood, as well as that which one projects in the course of one's lived experience. It is a thoughtful "owning up" to oneself. However, since we are always already "thrown" into a world, one's responsibility or "indebtedness"cannot, contrary to Hegel, be overcome and absolved in the form of absolute self-recognition. Rather, so long as we *are* at all, we are ineradicably finite, and so "indebted." It is our own responsibility to become aware of this indebtedness, and therein lies the possibility of our freedom, of "owning up" to this indebtedness. In other words, freedom is the possibility of resolving to exist (or not to exist) in a genuinely thoughtful or attentive relation with the finite interpretive possibilities of one's situatedness, a situatedness which is always already interhuman. What such thoughtfullness means for our concern with other selves is that it is more likely to open us to an awareness of the genuine being of others, and the possibility of concernfully helping *other* interpretive beings to be free for the possibility of resolutely accepting (or not accepting) *their own* historical situatedness and the possibilities of existence that are furnished by this situatedness. In becoming aware of our original indebtedness for everything which, including other selves, pertains to our very being, we may become more open to the *possibility* of forsaking both the domination of, and indifference towards others, and instead solicitously "leap ahead" of the other and "help the other to be free" for *her* ownmost possibilities. Heidegger's overall aim in his account of selfhood and others is to show how his finite form of thinking can make us explicitly aware of this original indebtedness to, among other things, the being of other selves. It is only on the basis of this explicit, contextual self-understanding that one may

thoughtfully and genuinely preclude the possibilities of domination or indifference concerning the other.

Now, although Heidegger's account of other selves is implicit to his whole concern with "*the question of the meaning of Being*"[7] in *Being and Time*, the issue is explicitly dealt with in sections 25-26, where Heidegger explains how "Being-with others" [*Mitsein mit Anderen*] is always already an essential part of *one's own* being as a situated "being-in-the-world,"[8] and indeed is the condition for the possibility of one's own encountering of, and being encountered by, actual, other selves.[9] This existential/ontological "Being-with others" is an original, "worldly" communality from which one does not distinguish oneself, and which precedes any attempts to "get over" to others from some abstract "subject." It is an original "Being-there-too" with others,[10] or a "*with-world*," "always one that I share with Others."[11] This "with-world" is the world of Dasein and Dasein is structured according to this original "withness." There are, as Heidegger says, "certain structures of Dasein which are equiprimordial with Being-in-the-

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[7]*BT*, *SZ*, p. 1. This point shall be developed as the explication proceeds.

[8]See *BT*., pp. 78-90, *SZ*., pp. 53-62, for a "preliminary sketch of Being-in-the-world"[In-der-Welt-sein] as what Heidegger calls, "the basic state of Dasein." As a basic state of Dasein, being-in-the-world is also a "structure," or "*unitary* phenomenon" which is composed of "constitutive items," namely, "the worldhood of the world," the "who" of Dasein, and "*Being-in* as such."(Ibid., p. 78-79) It is in the context of Heidegger's analysis of the "who" of Dasein (as part of his analysis of being-in-the-world) that "being-with-others" is first discussed. More shall be said concerning the notion of "being-in-the-world" (and the place of "being-with-others" in that structure), as the explication proceeds.

[9]*BT*, pp. 153-163; *SZ*, pp. 117-125.

[10]*BT*, p. 154, *SZ*, p. 118.

[11]*BT*, p. 155, *SZ*, p. 118.

world: *Mitsein* and *Mitdasein*."[12]

In order to avoid confusion on these matters, it is necessary to clarify our use of terminology right from the start, in particular, Heidegger's terms "Mitdasein," and "Mitsein." Instead of translating Mitdasein as "Dasein-with, " and Mitsein as either "Being-with"[13] or "co-being,"[14] as other commentators have done, we shall retain the German words because, having no need of hyphens, they best capture Heidegger's sense of the ontologically original, *a priori* togetherness of self and other. Although the english word "hyphen" is derived from the greek, *hyphen*, an adverb meaning "together," in its English usage it takes the form of a bridge which connects or brings together two separate entities *post hoc*. Thus, the terms "Dasein-with" and "Being-with," although they exhibit the newfound togetherness and unity characteristic of a compound word, nonethless do not exhibit an *original or ontological* togetherness. It is as if originally there were distinct entities called, "Dasein," "Being," and "with," which, prior to their union with other entities, meant something on their own. But this is clearly not the case for Heidegger.

As we have noted above, in terms of its ontological structure as being-in-the-world, Dasein *is* the possible togetherness of self and other, of the equiprimordiality of Mitsein and Mitdasein. Dasein is always already *in* a "with-world." Although Dasein is always *one's own*, it is in an ontological sense, simultaneously always "with" others. Heidegger did not want to give an egological account of self and other where the self

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[12]*BT*, p. 149, *SZ*, p. 114.

[13]In Macquarrie's and Robinson's translation of *Being and Time*, they translate Mitdasein as "Dasein-with" and Mitsein as "Being-with."

[14]This is Fred Dallmayr's translation of Mitsein. See his "Heidegger on Intersubjectivity," *Human Studies*, 3 (1980), pp. 221-246.

constitutes others, and vice versa. Rather, he wanted to preclude the possibility of an egological account right from the start. As essentially Mitsein, always already caught up in an interhuman world, Dasein *is* always already the possibility of genuinely encountering the Dasein of others, that is, the Mitdasein of others.[15] But equally, as Mitsein, Dasein *is* always already the possibility of being *encounterable* for others *as* Dasein, situated in a shared, with-world. As Mitsein, Dasein is thus Mitdasein in a double sense: it is simultaneously always already open for the possibility of being freed for its existential possibilities by others, as well as open for the possibility of freeing the Dasein of others for *their* existential possibilities. In other words, Dasein as Mitsein is simultaneously Mitdasein or encounterable *for others*, and the possible encountering of the Mitdasein *of others*. But this scenario is only intelligible if it is an original structure of the Dasein of *every* self. An original sense of the Dasein of others must be inscribed into the very being of Dasein as such. But *this* scenario is only intelligible in terms of the thesis that human being originally *is* commonality, *is* its being in a "with-world." Indeed, this is Heidegger's basic thesis concerning selfhood and the other.

As being-in-the-world, selfhood is not an atomistic subject who then constitutes objects, including other selves, nor is it the "product" of an encounter between Hegelian pre-selves; rather, the self, as concernfully engaged and "thrown"in the "world,"[16] is

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[15]*BT*, pp. 160-161, *SZ*, p. 123. As Heidegger says, "Mitsein is such that the disclosedness of the Mitdasein of Others belongs to it; this means that because Dasein's Being is Mitsein, its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others."

[16]*BT*., pp. 91-95, *SZ*, pp. 63-66. It is important to note that when Heidegger speaks of the "world," he is not referring to "the totality of those entities which can be present-at-hand within the world." (p. 93) Rather, he is referring to "that '*wherein*' a factical Dasein as such can be said to 'live.'" (p. 93) That is why Heidegger thinks that

always already situated by and presupposes an englobing interpretive context which is *in principle* interhuman. For Heidegger, what we are *a priori*[17] is being-in-the-world with others. Since for Heidegger, we are essentially interpretive beings whose lived experience thus always already presupposes and depends upon a *shared or common* interpretive context, we are, in our very being, before any abstract thematizing of our relations with others, in a sense indebted to the possibilities of existence offered by this original and enabling sense of commonality, as well as responsible for the ways in which *our own* existence concretely lives through some of these possibilities at the expense of other possibilities. Unlike Hegel, who thought that there is no meaning--intersubjective or otherwise--prior to what selves make actual in the world through their own *rational activity*, Heidegger thought that Mitsein is essential to one's very being, always already a latent possibility of "lived meaning"[18] which precedes and makes possible any actual

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Dasein's basic state is "being-*in-the*-world." What this notion of "world" points to is the fact that, in a fundamental sense, Dasein *is* its concernful dealings [*Umgang*, or "going about one's business"] in the world. I am not first of all a "bare subject without a world,"who then, through a process of cognitive acrobatics, tries to bridge the abyss between myself and "the world." Rather, before any such cognitive projects, I am first of all pragmatically engaged in and with a world, a world which is the meaning-context within which any cognitive project is possible.

[17]Though Heidegger thought that "philosophy should have the '*a priori*' as its theme, rather than 'empirical facts' as such,' (*BT*, p. 272) the sort of *a priori* of which Heidegger speaks is essentially historical and temporal, rather than eternal and immutable. (See Robert Burch, "On Phenomenology and its Practices," *Phenomenology + Pedagogy*, v. 7, (1989), p. 200). As we shall see, this point is crucial to understanding Heidegger's overall project. More shall be said concerning Heidegger's use of the *a priori* as this explication proceeds.

[18]I borrow this phrase from Robert Burch, "On Phenomenology and its Practices," p. 196. The significance of the adjective "lived," is that it signifies that meaning is not merely "out there," apart from any self's actual experience in the world, nor is it purely subjective. Rather, the self is always already situated by "concrete interpretive horizons," (ibid., p. 196) by contexts of possible meaning which, as "situating,"enter into, or are

encounter with other selves (or indeed one's isolation from other selves). "Higher than actuality stands *possibility*,"[19] says Heidegger.

That Heidegger is concerned with possibility does not mean that he is indifferent to ontic or actual encounters; rather, it means that he thinks we must not understand our relation to others merely in ontic terms, but rather, in terms of the more fundamental or ontological context of shared meanings which always already situate our being-in-the-world. Unlike Hegel, there is for Heidegger an "ontological difference"[20] between actual human encounters on the one hand, and the condition for the possibility of such encounters on the other hand. In the "attempt to think of the difference as such,"[21] what is important is that philosophy keep in view the irreducible and non-identical relation between the ongoing, situating interhuman context of meaning into which we are "thrown," on the one hand, and actual selves and "beings" which are situated in that context, on the other hand. For Heidegger, that is precisely what the "metaphysical tradition," culminating in Hegel, had failed to do. It had focussed on "beings," and had thus "forgotten" the transcending interpretive context (i.e. Being) within which beings may appear as such. It had forgotten the difference between Being and beings.

Heidegger did not want to make this mistake, and so he set out to uncover the

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"inscribed as possibilities" (ibid., p. 196) of meaning in terms of the *lived experience* of a self who is engaged in these contexts. The "world" comes meaningfully to be for *me* in the course of my lived experience and engagement with a "world" of possible meanings.

[19]*BT*, p. 63, *SZ*., p. 38..

[20]As we shall see, this notion of the "ontological difference" is not only one which is essential to Heidegger's account of self and other, but it is a central theme in *Being and Time*, and arguably, all of his writings.

[21]Martin Heidegger, *Identity and Difference*, translated and with an introduction by Joan Stambaugh, (New York: Harper & Row, Publishers, 1969), p. 65.

meaning of Being from out of the oblivion into which it had been cast by the metaphysical tradition. What he found was that the meaning of Being could be revealed through an ontological understanding of who *we* are as interpretive beings who are meaningfully situated and engaged in a changing, interhuman, interpretive context (i.e. Being). But because such subject matter is our involvement in a context which *always already* situates us (i.e. Being) it is not some "object" which exists apart from us, nor is it *aufgehoben* in infinite or absolute knowledge. Rather, it concerns *our* finite mode of existence, a mode which is always "on the way," or being-lived, and as such also open-ended, always the *possibility* of being oneself or not being oneself.[22] As always being-lived, the subject matter (i.e. the meaning of our situatedness in interhuman contexts of meaning) is to some extent always available for intelligent interpretation and elucidation, yet as open-ended and unmeasurable, it is likewise as elusive and slippery as smoke is to the grasping hands of a child.[23]

An example from Jose Ortega y Gasset's book, *Meditations on Quixote* (1961) shall help to clarify the meaning of the above point. Ortega's discussion of the proverb, "one cannot see the forest for the trees," is an apt characterization of Heidegger's sense of intersubjectivity as essentially a latent, possible meaning "inscribed as such in the transcendence of lived experience."[24] For Ortega, "the forest is the latent as such,"[25] and in this way is the englobing context of meaning within which any particular tree or

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[22]*BT.*, p. 33, *SZ*, p. 12.

[23]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 122.

[24]Robert Burch, "On Phenomenology and its Practices," p. 198.

[25]Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Quixote*, (New York, London: W.W. Norton & Company, 1961), p. 61.

enumerable aggregate of trees may come into focus and be encountered as such. Moreover, as Ortega points out, the forest--a metaphor for an englobing context of meaning--is a totality which, from our finite standpoint, always eludes us.

> From any spot within its borders the forest is just a possibility: a path along which we could proceed, a spring from which a gentle murmur is brought to us in the arm of silence and which we might discover a few steps away, snatches of songs sung in the distance by birds perched on branches under which we could pass. The forest is the aggregate of possible acts of ours which, when carried out, would lose their real value. The part of the forest immediately before us is a screen, as it were, behind which the rest of it lies hidden and aloof.[26]

Such is also the case with Heidegger. As latent, the interhuman context of meaning in principle always escapes any attempts at absolute closure. For Heidegger, any such attempts at absolute cognition *always presuppose* something more fundamental (i.e. an interpretive context) to which they are related, and as a result, can never be "absolute."[27] On this view, it is unintelligible to attempt to provide an exhaustive and

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[26]Jose Ortega y Gasset, *Meditations on Quixote*, p. 60.

[27]Heidegger makes the important distinction between "relative knowledge" and "absolute knowledge" in his *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, trans. By Parvis Emad and Kenneth Maly, (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1988), pp. 13-17. Relative knowledge is a knowledge which "*remains knowingly in what it knows*," (p. 14) it is "caught up in and imprisoned by what it knows." (p. 15) But absolute knowledge absolves or liberates "itself from what it knows," (p. 15) and as such is "not relative." (p. 14) Heidegger's ultimate concern is whether or not "purely absolved absolute knowledge" is even intelligible. That is, if for Heidegger, there is something-- a context of meaning or "Being"-- which is *always* more fundamental than the pursuit of absolute knowledge, then can knowledge ever be anything other than *relative* to this fundamental context of meaning, and hence, not "absolute?" What underlies Heidegger's concern is his contention that the "tradition"--culminating in Hegel's explication of absolute knowledge--had forgotten the "ontological difference" between Being (i.e. an apriori context of meaning which makes possible any encounter with beings) and actual beings. Heidegger's project involves an attempt to "recover" a path of thought which thinks this ontological difference.

absolute account of the meaning of self and other as Hegel thought. In response to Hegel's absolute account (and indeed the whole "metaphysical tradition"), Heidegger might have said, along with Hamlet, "there are more things in heaven and earth, than are dreamt of in your philosophy."[28] Because the interhuman is an essential part of the englobing and changing context of meaning which always already situates selfhood, one must always be able to "say more" about the meaning of the self's comportment in a world with other selves.[29] Contrary to what Hegel thought, no single perspective has *absolute* authority; to refer to Ortega's forest metaphor again, there is no single, *necessary* path which constitutes the "absolute truth" of the forest. There are merely the many and varied paths which the forest, as a context of meaning, offers as "possibilities." Moreover, because for Heidegger, the human way of being *is* its finite standpoint on this or that "path," one could never rise above the forest, like a bird, in order to absolutely

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[28]William Shakespeare, "Hamlet, Prince of Denmark," in *William Shakespeare: The Complete Works*, (New York and Avenel, New Jersey: Gramercy Books, 1975), p. 1080. Of course, the fact that Hegel would object to this statement being applied to himself does not mean that he is merely a rigid system builder who stubbornly tries to fit all actuality into an already closed circle; rather, from his perspective, Hamlet is correct, but only in terms of the metaphysical tradition which precedes *his* (i.e. Hegel's) philosophy. If for Hegel, the "True is the whole," then for him, philosophy is at once radically open (as Hamlet would have liked), yet also a comprehensive and closed totality (what Hamlet perhaps did not recognize).

[29]This is analogous to Wittgenstein's so-called "private language argument." For Wittgenstein, one's own "experiences" or meanings are not confined to the privacy of one's own mind, where such meanings are wholly isolated "nuggets" which each of us merely stores in our "mental container." Rather, in the attempt to subvert this Cartesian model of the mind, Wittgenstein thought that all such "private meanings" or "private languages" in fact presuppose a shared, *pragmatic* context of meaning in terms of which any word or language, and so any individual experience, is first of all meaningful. Before any "private experience" one always already exists in a pragmatic, shared world of meaning. For a comparison between this view and that of Heidegger, see William Barrett, *The Illusion of Technique*, (Garden City, New York: Anchor Books, 1967), pp. 65-81.

"unconceal"[30] the infinite system of paths offered by the forest. As always already situated in a context of meaning--a particular path in the forest--we live our lives, taking that context of meaning for granted, so to speak. In a vague but primordial sense, we live our lives in an "average" or "everyday" understanding of this context of meaning. Though Heidegger is concerned to "lay bare" this englobing interpretive context, as well as our primordial understanding of this context, he does not think this can be done by somehow detaching oneself from the context and making it an object of knowledge for "subjects." As he says,

> This everyday way in which things have been interpreted is one into which Dasein has grown in the first instance, with never a possibility of extrication. In it, out of it, and against it, all genuine understanding, interpreting, and communicating, all re-discovering and appropriating

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[30]Martin Heidegger, "On the Essence of Truth," in *Basic Writings*, ed., by David Farrell Krell, (San Francisco: HarperCollins Publishers, 1977), p. 127. "Unconcealment" is Heidegger's translation of the Greek, *aletheia*, a notion which had traditionally been translated as "truth." For Heidegger, to unconceal is to uncover or "to let be--that is, to let beings be as the beings they are." (p. 127) To let be "means to engage oneself with the open region and its openness into which every being comes to stand, bringing that openness, as it were, along with itself." (p. 127) As such, it is important to note that for Heidegger, truth "is not a feature of correct propositions which are asserted of an "object" by a human "subject' and then "are valid" somewhere." (p. 129) Rather, Heidegger attempted to "rethink the ordinary concept of truth" in terms of the way in which beings come meaningfully to be for Dasein *as always already being-in-the-world*, that is, as a *situated* self whose meaningful engagement with beings presupposes that situating context of meaning [*Sinn*]. Thus "truth" does not mean for Heidegger, absolute unconcealment or unveiling, so that the mystery all but disappears; rather, for Heidegger, "truth" is the process of unconcealing/concealing. Whenever we take a path in the forest, that path and part of its surroundings is unconcealed or revealed. At the same time, however, what we hear and see on our way along the path is always limited to a changing and amoebic field; thus there is a point at which we can't "quite make out" the moving figure, deep in the forest, or the "whishing" sound of the stream which recedes as we move on. Anytime we focus our attention on one "path," other "paths," often without our even knowing it, recede from focus, from unconcealment -- that is, they recede and hide behind a veil and become concealed.

> anew, are performed. In no case is a Dasein, untouched and unseduced by this way in which things have been interpreted, set before the open country of a 'world-in-itself' so that it just beholds what it encounters.[31]

For Heidegger, human being is radically finite. But that means that for him there is no infinite or absolute account (i.e. Hegelian)--no final story or absolute identity--of the "truth" of our relations with other selves. Rather, the "truth"[32] of the interhuman is always revealed *a priori*, in terms of a changing interpretive horizon to which we are always already indebted for our being. It is only by thoughtfully becoming aware of, and so resolutely accepting, this indebtedness that we may be free; and it is only on the basis of this genuine self-understanding, this freedom, that one may forsake both the domination of, and indifference towards others, and instead open oneself to a "thinking that is not a willing," a silent *Denken* which recognizes them in their finite difference from oneself.

Such, at least, is the preliminary sense of Heidegger's account of selfhood and the other. In order to unpack the meaning and provisional defensibility of Heidegger's account, let us now turn to an explication of Heidegger's account of self and other as it

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[31]*BT*, p. 213, *SZ*, p. 169..

[32]It is important to note that for Heidegger, there is no essential difference between truth and meaning. There is no separation between the meaning of Being and the truth of Being. This view is opposed to the Kantian distinction between reason (*Vernunft*) which seeks meaning, and intellect *(Verstand*) which seeks cognition. From the Kantian perspective, Heidegger's equation of meaning and truth is a fallacy. Commentators such as Hannah Arendt have pointed this out. As she notes in her book, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I *Thinking*, p. 15: "*The need of reason is not inspired by the quest for truth but by the quest for meaning. And truth and meaning are not the same.* The basic fallacy, taking precedence over all specific metaphysical fallacies, is to interpret meaning on the model of truth. The latest and in some respects most striking instance of this occurs in Heidegger's *Being and Time*, which starts out by raising "anew the question of the meaning of Being." Heidegger himself, in a later interpretation of his own initial question, says explicitly: "'Meaning of Being' and 'Truth of Being' say the same."

occurs in *Being and Time*.

Fundamental Ontology: The Project of *Being and Time*

Heidegger's account of self and other is only intelligible in terms of his larger project of seeking a fundamental ontology by attempting to "work out the question of the meaning of *Being* and to do so concretely."[33] Heidegger's ultimate concern in *Being and Time* is with ontology, and the issue of self and other is only intelligible in terms of this concern. It is thus crucial that we understand Heidegger's project of seeking a fundamental ontology. Put simply, the project which motivates *Being and Time* is the "need"[34] to "raise anew *the question of the meaning of Being*."[35] On the surface, such a question may appear trivial and unnecessary. On this view, not only is Being the "'most universal' concept," but as a result, it is also "indefinable" and "of all concepts the one that is self-evident."[36] But if this is the case, why question the meaning of Being? Isn't the answer already there in front of us?

Heidegger's response is that the "answers" listed above are not really answers at all, but ontic presuppositions or prejudices, which, as such, do more to reveal the

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[33]*BT*, p. 19.

[34]See *BT*., p. 21, *SZ*, p. 2. Macquarrie and Robinson translate the German *Notwendigkeit* as "Necessity," which, while it captures a sense of the urgency which Heidegger thinks the "question of Being" must have for us, does not do so in the existential sense intended by Heidegger. For Heidegger, *Notwendigkeit* denotes "a turning in need" which is necessitated by the "destitute time" in which we find ourselves (or in this case, in which we *do not* find ourselves).

[35]*BT*., p. 21, *SZ*, p. 2.

[36]*BT*., pp. 22-23, *SZ*, pp. 3-4.. This is a summary of the presuppositions which Heidegger thinks underlie the belief that the question of the meaning of Being is trivial and unnecessary.

obscurity and enigmatic character of Being, than to truly clarify it.[37] For Heidegger, the object of philosophy is to recover the meaning of Being from obscurity, but Heidegger does not want to understand Being in terms of the presence-at-hand of "what is," of beings or *ontic* affairs. That ontic understanding of being has made it "possible for the dogma to spread in philosophy uncontested to the present day that being is the simplest and most self-evident concept, that it is neither susceptible of nor in need of definition."[38] Instead, Heidegger thinks that since Being is the "most complex and most obscure concept," "arriving at a concept of being" is "the most urgent task of philosophy."[39]

Accordingly, the question concerning the meaning of Being must be formulated in such a way that it may take a "step back" from such ontic prejudices and ask about Being in so far as it may "be conceived in a way of its own, essentially contrasting with the concepts in which entities acquire their determinate signification."[40] In other words, Being must be understood on its own terms, not in the abstract manner in which we cognize beings. Yet how is such a statement intelligible? "A being--that's something, a table, a chair, a tree, the sky, a body, some words, an action. A being, yes, indeed--but being?"[41] Indeed, "can something like being be imagined? If we try to do this, doesn't our head start to swim?"[42]

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[37]*BT*, pp. 23-24, *SZ*, pp. 4-5..

[38]Martin Heidegger, *The Basic Problems of Phenomenology*, trans., by Albert Hofstadter, (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1982), p. 14. Hereafter cited as *BPP*.

[39]*BPP*, p. 14.

[40]*BT*., p. 26, *SZ*, p. 6.

[41]*BPP*, p. 13..

[42]*BPP*., p. 13.

In order to clarify the meaning of the *question* concerning the meaning of Being, it shall be necessary to make explicit two important and interrelated themes which thus far have only been implicit in our discussion. As we shall see, these themes are essential to Heidegger's ontological account of self and other. First, since, as we have noted, Heidegger is concerned with the conditions for the possibility of interhuman encounters--the interhuman *a priori*--it will be important to make sense of Heidegger's unique conception of the temporal and historical *a priori*, which, while it remains for him the *Sache* or "subject matter" of philosophic thought, nonetheless is considered in terms radically different from the "metaphysical tradition." Secondly, since Heidegger is concerned with giving the most fundamental or *ontological* account of the interhuman, and not with giving an *ontic* account of actual encounters, it shall be important to discuss Heidegger's urge to think the "ontological difference" between Being and beings, between the ontological and the ontic, and the fact that, for Heidegger, the meaning of Being or ontology must be "thought" by philosophy in a manner which is different from the way in which we cognize beings, a way which has governed the metaphysical tradition up to Hegel. In short, it must "think Being" as the englobing, interhuman context of meaning *a priori*, which is always already presupposed by any positing of beings.[43] Taken together, these two points are crucial to understanding the formal conditions under which Heidegger's account of self and other is intelligible.

Having discussed these two themes, it will then be necessary to turn to an explication of sections 25-26 of *Being and Time*. The focus here will be to show that, not

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[43]*BPP.*, pp. 11-12.

only is Heidegger in principle concerned with the meaning of self and other *a priori* and *ontologically*, but he is also concerned to show that such meaning is in fact *essential* and specific to the structure of our very being-in-the-world, that is to the Being of *Dasein*. It is thus in the context of phenomenologically disclosing the ontological structure of Dasein *a priori*, that is, *its* Being, that one's relation with others (i.e. Mitsein and Mitdasein) first comes to the fore.

A. Heidegger's Conception of the *a priori*

To begin with then, we shall discuss Heidegger's sense of the *a priori*. This shall be done in the general context of a debate which lies at the core of the "metaphysical tradition" to which Heidegger addresses himself.

The project of *Being and Time* may be viewed as a third alternative to a debate which is central to the metaphysical tradition and its differing views concerning the standpoint of philosophic thought in relation to Being. On the one hand, with the Platonic tradition, philosophy involves a proper orientation to the Being of beings, which essentially stands outside of the contingent "cave of history," and is able to cognitively grasp or pin down objects of knowledge which can be *identified* as fixed and eternal. Here, the metaphor of transportation is crucial: essential philosophical insight is "arrived at" by "transporting" oneself out of the contingent cave of history, and into the *a priori* realm of the true and the good.[44] In this way, one takes leave of contingent, temporal

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[44]Plato, *The Republic of Plato*, trans., with notes and an interpretive essay, by Allan Bloom, (New York: Basic Books Inc., Publishers, 1968), 514a-517b, pp. 193-196.

existence in the world because it is vague, fleeting, and nothing more than a mere play of different shadows. Being is thus pinned down and identified in terms of a fixed, objective structure. On the other hand, however, there is the skeptical alternative that where we stand philosophically is only precisely where we find ourselves, i.e., in a contingent and fragmented world. On this view, the Platonic notion of "transport" to a realm of *a priori*, fixed and eternal truths involves a meaningless abstraction which completely misses the pragmatic basis of human existence. Echoing this sentiment, David Hume, in commenting on the "kind of life" which nature has intended for human beings, wrote:

> Indulge your passion for science, says she, but let your science be human, and such as may have a direct reference to action and society. Abstruse thought and profound researches I prohibit, and will severely punish, by the pensive melancholy which they introduce, by the endless uncertainty in which they involve you, and by the cold reception which your pretended discoveries shall meet with, when communicated. Be a philosopher; but, amidst all your philosophy, be still a man[45].

On this view, the idea that philosophy must abstract from experience and seek a fixed and eternal *a priori*, definitive of Being as such, is "nothing but sophistry and illusion."[46] Instead, what "may be of advantage to mankind," is the "limitation of our enquiries to such subjects as are best adapted to the narrow capacity of human understanding."[47]

Nonetheless, for Heidegger, the skeptical alternative is not truly an alternative--a genuine 'other'-- to the Platonic framework because it is already an essential part of that

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[45]David Hume, *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, ed. By Eric Steinberg, (Indianapolis: Hackett Publishing Company, 1977), p. 4.

[46]Ibid, p. 114.

[47]Ibid, p. 111-112.

very framework. The Platonic framework is already structured in terms of the "either/or" of the "fixed *a priori* vs. contingent and empirical" dichotomy. In a general sense, Plato favours the "fixed *a priori*" pole, while the skeptic favours the "contingent and empirical pole." The skeptic does not believe that fixed, *a priori* truths are knowable, though they may exist. All that we can "know," as finite human beings, is the empirical knowledge furnished by our experience. But the skeptic's project is only meaningful in a context where the fixed *a priori* is an ideal (which, as an ideal, may or may not be achieved). In other words, though skepticism takes itself to be the 'other' of--and hence a genuine alternative to--Platonic metaphysics, it in fact is only meaningful within that very metaphysical framework, and so is not a genuine alternative at all. The point here is that skepticism does not subvert the Platonic framework because it presupposes its very categories; skepticism is a negative moment *within* the context of the Platonic framework.

Now, although the Hegelian alternative attempts to subvert the dichotomous nature of this framework through the contention that Reason or truth is *only* realized insofar as it is made actual by finite selves in the midst of contingency,[48] it was

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[48]Hegel thus thought that the "timeless and fixed truth or *a priori* vs. contingent and empirical" dichotomy was a false dichotomy. For Hegel, such truth must be historically realized in the world by finite beings. In order to understand where we stand, for Hegel, philosophy must neither take flight from the world (Plato), nor must it lose itself amidst the contingent and varied standpoints in the world; rather, it must comprehend the rationality of the actual and the actuality of the rational. Thus, as Hegel says in *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, pp. 21-22: "To comprehend *what is* is the task of philosophy, for *what is* is reason. As far as the individual is concerned, each individual is in any case a *child of his time*; thus philosophy, too, is *it own time comprehended in thoughts*. It is just as foolish to imagine that any philosophy can transcend its contemporary world as that an individual can overleap his own time or leap over Rhodes. If his theory does indeed transcend his own time, it builds itself a world *as it ought to be*, then it certainly has an existence, but only within his opinions--a pliant

Heidegger's view that in fact, Hegel was not radical enough, and that Hegel was essentially still caught in the Platonic framework because he merely presented a new strategy for getting at an *a priori* defined in terms of timeless and fixed truths or *identity*. Thus, on Heidegger's view, Hegel's "third alternative" was not an alternative at all but merely a modern variation on the Platonic theme. According to Heidegger, the only alternative which could count as a "third alternative" would be one which could subvert the very demand for an *eternal and fixed a priori*, and instead pose the issue of philosophical thought and Being in terms of an *a priori* which still has the temporal sense of "always already," "what comes before," or "from the earlier," but which does not adhere to the demand for fixed, timeless truths, and *identities* which always succeed in obliterating difference.[49] For Heidegger then, though he agrees with Parmenides' that "to be and to think [*noein*, the activity of *nous*] are the same,"[50] he does not, like Parmenides,

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medium in which the imagination can construct anything it pleases." (p. 21-22). Or again: "To recognize reason as the rose in the cross of the present and thereby to delight in the present--this rational insight is the *reconciliation* with actuality which philosophy grants to those who have received the inner call to *comprehend*, to preserve their subjective freedom in the realm of the substantial, and at the same time to stand with their subjective freedom not in a particular and contingent situation, but in what has being in and for itself." (p. 22).

[49]Though this notion of the temporal *a priori* is implicit in the whole of *Being and Time*, it is given a more systematic treatment in sections 78-83 (*BT*, pp. 456-488), where Heidegger discusses Dasein's temporality. One may also find an explicit discussion of the temporal *a priori* in Heidegger's *BPP*, sections 19-22, pp. 227-324. Also see Robert Burch, "On Phenomenology and its Practices," p. 200, where he says: "Yet the 'a priori' it [phenomenology] seeks is not "absolutely independent of all experience," abstract, eternal, and immutable. It is instead a concrete context of meaning that, in "already preceding" our encounters with things and our explicit meaning accomplishments, relates to these, not by determining them absolutely, but as ongoing situating figure to ground. Such a context of meaning would be essentially historical; indeed its transformations would constitute the essence of history itself."

[50]Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 136.

conceive of Being as the divine, eternal and immutable *a priori*, that somehow "causes Thinking and Being to be the same."[51]

Rather, for Heidegger, Being is *a priori*, but only because Being is the temporally (and so changing, not eternal) "original determinant"[52] of possibilities of meaning which situate us. In other words, Being, as the englobing and changing context of possible meaning which situates Dasein, because it always precedes and makes possible any positing of beings, is fundamentally determined by, or better, *as* temporality, and as such, is *a priori*. As a situating nexus of *possibilities*, it always already precedes, and so situates, our *actual* affairs in daily life. As Heidegger says,

> Because the original determinant of possibility, the origin of possibility itself, is time, time temporalizes itself as the absolutely earliest. *Time is earlier than any possible earlier* of whatever sort, because it is the basic condition for an earlier as such. And because time as the source of all enablings (possibilities) is the earliest, all possibilities as such in their possibility-making function have the character of the earlier. That is to say, they are a priori.[53]

For Heidegger, it is precisely the demand for a fixed and atemporal *a priori* and its ability to have the "final word" on the essential nature of reality which caused western

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[51]Ibid., p. 136. Hannah Arendt makes the interesting point that with Anaximander, and most definitely Parmenides, the Olympian gods, who before the advent of "philosophy" represented the immortality towards which mortal humans must strive, were replaced by the philosophical concept of "Being," the new god, so to speak. According to Arendt, this change was largely due to the problematic character of the Olympian gods, who, although they were immortal or deathless (*a-thanatoi*), "were not eternal" because "they have all been born." Accordingly, "it is the philosophers who introduce an absolute *arche* or Beginning which is itself unbegun, a permanent and ungenerated source of generation," what Parmenides called "Being." It is precisely this characterization of Being as eternal and permanent which is an issue for Heidegger.

[52]*BPP*., p. 325.

[53]*BPP*., p. 325.

metaphysics up to Hegel, to view the question of the meaning of Being as already, clear, self-evident, and in fact superfluous.[54] The issue here, so thought Heidegger, was that metaphysics up to Hegel, in its concern with "identity," had "forgotten" the "ontological difference" between, on the one hand, *Being*, or the englobing, interhuman context of meaning on the basis of which the cognitive project of pinning down fixed and atemporal truths is even thinkable, let alone a possibility in the first place, and, on the other hand, the particular ontic or actual relations between *beings* or things which always already presuppose that fundamental englobing context of meaning (i.e. Being). This notion of the "ontological difference" is central to Heidegger's whole project, including his account of self and other. As such, before we proceed any further, it will be necessary to clarify what is meant by the "ontological difference" between Being and beings.

B. The Ontological Difference

According to Heidegger, the "tradition" had forgotten the question of the meaning of Being because, having clearly defined Being in terms of beings, Being no longer remained a mystery and hence worthy of further inquiry.[55] Heidegger's ultimate concern

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[54]*BT*, p. 21, *SZ*, p. 2..

[55]For Heidegger, the problem with the "traditional" view was that it presupposed that Being was an object of knowledge, apart from the activity of the knowing *being*, and that Being was thus *absolutely knowable* and self-evident. On this view, there was no "in between" to the bipolar framework of knowledge and opinion, no sense of a temporal "always already." But this was because this view's conception of the *a priori* was one which was equated with fixed and atemporal truths. But what this meant, according to Heidegger, was that Being was essentially reduced to the fixed categories employed in "pinning down" beings. Being and beings were conflated. In thus viewing Being in terms of beings, the "tradition" had cast the very question concerning Being into oblivion. Heidegger thought that only by raising the question of Being in terms *genuinely other*

as a philosopher was to recover a path of thought which would once again seriously pose the question concerning the meaning of Being.[56] Heidegger attempted to do this by insisting on the need to think the ineradicable "ontological difference" between *beings* or *Seiendes,* and that on the basis of which [*woraufhin*] beings may be encountered as beings, namely, *Being* or *Sein.*[57]

Sciences which deal with beings, with "that which is," "always deal with specific domains"[58] such as history, nature, or geometry. Moreover, each domain may be divided into "particular spheres,"each of which is guided by its own "research problems." The aim of such "positive sciences" is to know all objects or beings which fall within the parameters and categories specified by the different domains and their spheres. But what is important here is the way in which the positive sciences approach their subject matter. That is, they attempt to "understand" their subject matter only insofar as it may serve an

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than the "tradition's" insistence on an atemporal, universal and necessary *a priori*, would it be possible to concretely understand who we are and where we stand in the world.

[56]Thus, contrary to popular opinion, Heidegger is not simply an "existentialist," nor did he consider himself to be doing "existential philosophy;" rather, his concern is with ontology, with being. Three years after the publication of *Being and Time* (1927), Heidegger wrote in his *Hegel's Phenomenology of Spirit*, p. 12-13: "I am not suggesting that philosophy should be delivered over to fanaticism and to the proclamation of any opinions about the world whatsoever (in other words, what currently carries the eminent title of "existential philosophy"). In this view, all strict conceptuality and every genuine problem are reduced to the level of mere technique and schematic. It was never my idea to preach an "existential philosophy." Rather, I have been concerned with renewing the question of *ontology*--the most central problem of Western philosophy--the question of being..."

[57]*BT*, pp. 25-26; *SZ*, pp. 6.; also see Heidegger's *BPP*, pp. 1-24 and pp. 227-330, especially pp. 318-330. See also Heidegger's *The Essence of Reasons*, trans., by Terrence Malick, (Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 1969), p. 27, where Heidegger explicitly refers to "the Ontological Difference" [*ontologische Differenz*].

[58]*BPP.*, p. 13.

instrumental purpose in a larger research problem. On this model, the scientist is a detached "subject" who posits "objects" which must be investigated. As such, the objects of the positive sciences must be identified, subdued and pinned down, so that they can be reduced to *a being* which is "unveiled" and lying there in front of the detached observer, vulnerable to the whims of a particular research problem.

An example in the study of history may help to illustrate this point. The same complex period in German history, say 1870-1914, may be essentially "understood" or identified in terms proper to social, economic, or intellectual history.[59] For example, in the words of one historian: "the most remarkable aspect of modern German history, and one of the most amazing chapters in the entire history of modern times, is the economic transformation which occurred in Germany during the last half of the nineteenth century."[60] As identified in terms of the specific domain of economic history then, "Germany during the last half of the nineteenth century" is essentially understood in terms of "the change from a backward and predominantly agrarian nation to a modern and highly efficient industrial and technological state."[61] In other words, this period of German history is understood in terms of categories (economic, social, political, etc.) imported from the "social sciences," categories which may be used to identify and "understand" a myriad of historical periods in much the same way. Such categories are applied to a complex and elusive subject matter, and are used to capture and "pin down" fungible

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[59]See for example, Koppel S. Pinson, *Modern Germany: Its History and Civilization*, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1966), pp. 219-274.

[60]Ibid, p. 219.

[61]Ibid, p. 219.

aspects of the subject matter which are "in conformity with...current research problems."[62] Heidegger's view is that such methods of understanding are derivative and abstract and do not disclose the "truth" of their subject matter, namely, the interpretive or "hermeneutic" context of the historian who sets out to understand a particular period in history, as well as that of the historically situated agents themselves. The way such sciences see and "understand" their subject matter is already prescribed by their preliminary conclusions and the specific methodological practices employed in reaching those conclusions. The positive sciences attempt to "know" their subject matter in terms proper to beings or identifiable "entities," to that which can be pinned down, dominated, and proved. But these sciences do not ask the more fundamental question concerning the hermeneutic context within which their research problems are first of all intelligible. These sciences, says Heidegger, are "non-philosophical sciences" because they "have as their theme some being or beings,"[63] and not "that on the basis of which,"[64] any being may be posited in the first place, namely the hermeneutic context of the inquirer, what Heidegger calls "Being." In other words, the positive sciences fail to understand that "Being and the structure of Being lie beyond every entity and every possible character which an entity may possess."[65] Being is always already beyond, and so *different* than any particular "identity" we abstractly impose on the world.

Now, it was Heidegger's view that the entire philosophical "tradition" before him,

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[62]*BPP*, p. 13.
[63]*BPP*, p. 13.
[64]*BT*., p. 26, *SZ*, p. 6.
[65]*BT*., p. 62, *SZ*, p. 38..

culminating in Hegel, was the origin of a *Seinsvergessenheit*, a "forgetfulness of Being." As we have seen with Hegel, the pinnacle of philosophic thought came to be equated with *absolute knowing*, or what is the same thing for Heidegger, with understanding Being [*onta*] in terms of the conceptual totality [*logos*] of *ousia* (the "being-ness of beings"), but an *ousia* conceived in terms of an objective and fixed *identity* which may be represented to a knowing subject.[66] Metaphysics, so thought Heidegger, identified the ontological in terms of the ontic or *actual*.[67] According to Heidegger, not only Hegel, but Kant and Husserl too were part of the metaphysical tradition which had forgotten Being due to its conception of the *a priori* as fixed, universal, and necessary. While Heidegger was no doubt part of the transcendental tradition in philosophy,[68] he differs from Kant and Husserl

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[66]Dennis Schmidt, "Between Hegel and Heidegger," *Man and World*, 15, (1982), 22-23.

[67]It is important to recall Hegel's maxim: "What is rational is actual; and what is actual is rational." *Elements of the Philosophy of Right*, p. 20. In this way, Hegel thought he could bridge the "ontological difference" between being and beings. For him, there is no essential difference between "being itself" and what human *beings* make actual in the world, i.e. the infinite working out of Reason or themselves. For Hegel, there is no transcendent context of intelligibility, no Being, beyond that which is actualized in the world by rational self-determination. As Hegel says, "*what is* is reason." (Ibid., p. 21). It is precisely this view which Heidegger is trying to undermine. While for Hegel, there is no "Being," no "other" beyond or outside Reason, for Heidegger, it is only on the basis of Being, or a transcending context of meaning, that anything like "reason" can itself be meaningful.

[68]Like Kant and Husserl, Heidegger's project involves a disclosure of the a priori structures which precede and make possible any actual experience, or in Heideggerian language, ontic relations. But unlike Kant and Husserl, who thought that the most fundamental structures were fixed, universal, and necessary structures of cognition, Heidegger thought that more fundamental to and presupposed by such cognitive structures, was our pragmatic engagement in an englobing context of meaning, what Heidegger refers to as *Sein* or being. Insofar as being is the condition for the possibility of any encounter with beings, "*Being is the transcendens pure and simple*." (*BT*, p. 62) Moreover, "every disclosure of Being as the *transcendens* is *transcendental* knowledge. *Phenomenological truth (the disclosedness of Being) is veritas transcendentalis*," (ibid, p.

in a crucial respect. While Heidegger, like Kant and Husserl, was concerned with the essential structures which precede and make possible any experience whatsoever, there is a significant difference in what he took those essential structures to be. While he took the essential conditions of experience to be *a priori*, he at the same time thought that they were not a fixed and universal a priori, as Kant, Hegel[69] and Husserl had thought, but rather, as we have seen, that the *a priori* constituted the historically and temporally-relative, ever-changing, interhuman context of meaning, or Being. The quest for a fixed, universal, and necessary *a priori*, on Heidegger's view, exhibited a "forgetting" of the true object or enduring mystery of philosophy, namely, Aristotle's question, "What is being?"[70] For Heidegger, philosophy is not concerned with the science of knowing or pinning down beings *as* beings. That is the task of the positive sciences. Instead, philosophy is more fundamental, and as such it "deals with what every positing of beings...must already *presuppose* essentially," that is, with "the science of being,"[71] or ontology. In this way, for Heidegger, philosophy is *"transcendental science"*[72] or "fundamental ontology;"[73] it is

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62) or "transcendental truth." The point here is that for Heidegger, being--the *veritas transcendentalis*--does not determine the ontic or empirical absolutely or necessarily, but only as the englobing and situating context of meaning in which the ontic comes to presence.

[69]Of course, for Hegel, such a priori truths were historically realized, and in that sense not fixed or ready-made. But for Hegel, the ultimate goal was nevertheless absolute knowledge or closure, and in this sense, he was closer to Kant or Husserl than Heidegger. The point here is that from Heidegger's perspective, such attempts to pin down reality are not fundamental and in fact presuppose a pragmatic engagement in an englobing context of meaning within which "pinning down" is first of all intelligible.

[70]*BPP*, p. 15.

[71]*BPP*, pp. 12-13.

[72]*BPP*, p. 17.

[73]*BT*, p. 34; *SZ*, p. 13.

concerned with that which precedes and makes possible a positing or understanding of beings or particular entities in the world (including other selves), that is, with the temporal *a priori*. Thus, "philosophy should have the '*a priori*' as its theme, rather than 'empirical facts' as such."[74] "Philosophy is the theoretical conceptual interpretation of being, of being's structure and its possibilities," says Heidegger. "Philosophy is ontological."[75]

As we shall see in our explication of sections 25-26, it is precisely this concern with fundamental ontology, with the temporal *a priori*, which characterizes Heidegger's account of the interhuman in terms of Mitsein and Mitdasein. As we shall see, Mitsein and Mitdasein are part of the ontological or *a priori* character of Dasein, a character which precedes and makes possible any actual encounters or the absence of such encounters. Accordingly, we may now turn to sections 25-26 of *Being and Time*.

Mitsein and Mitdasein as Ontological Characteristics of Dasein: Sections 25-26

In explicating Heidegger's account of Mitsein and Mitdasein in sections 25-26, it is necessary to understand the place of these sections in the text. Sections 25-26 are situated within Heidegger's overall discussion of what he calls the "basic state of Dasein," namely "Being-in-the-world in general."[76] Two points must be made if we are to understand this overall discussion. The first point involves Dasein's essential relationship with Being, a relationship which allows Dasein to become the theme for Heidegger's inquiry. As we have seen in our discussion of Being as the temporal *a priori*, Being is not some entity

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[74]*BT*, p. 272, *SZ*, p. 229..
[75]*BPP*, p. 11.
[76]*BT*., p. 78, *SZ*, p. 53..

"out there" which we then "know," but rather, it is *always already* understood by us because of the kind of beings (i.e. temporally situated, inquiring beings) we are.[77] Indeed, Dasein is ontically different from other entities "by the fact that, in its very Being, that Being is an *issue* for it."[78] Our Being is an issue for us in the sense that we are the sort of beings who inquire into, and so *interpret*, who we are in relation to the world and others. To interpret or understand our "worldly" existence *is* our Being. Although in a mundane sense we exist as part of the "furniture of the universe" in the way that cars, tables, and chairs do, we are nonetheless essentially different in that we *meaningfully* exist. In other words,"*only Dasein can be meaningful [sinnvoll] or meaningless [sinnlos].*"[79] Indeed, to be *is* to interpret within an englobing context of possible meanings which is the "world." Ontically, we are the kind of entities who, because we always have our "Being to be," and must therefore meaningfully exist in this or that manner, always presuppose, and so understand in a vague sense the *a priori*, interhuman, interpretive contexts, or Being, which furnish different possibilities of existence in the first place. In Heidegger's language, such pre-ontological understanding "is a constitutive state of Dasein's Being, and this implies that Dasein, in its Being, has a relationship towards that Being--a relationship which itself is one of Being."[80] In other words, "*Understanding of Being is*

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[77]It is important to note that Heidegger explicitly says that "the meaning of the Being of that entity which we call "Dasein"," is "*temporality*." (*BT*., p. 38) If Dasein is to be the theme of Heidegger's inquiry--that through which the meaning of Being is disclosed--then the meaning of Being, the *a priori* which precedes and makes possible all ontologies and ontic affairs, will necessarily also be fundamentally *temporal*.

[78]*BT*., p. 32, *SZ*, p. 12..

[79]*BT*., p. 193, *SZ*, p. 151..

[80]*BT*., p. 32, *SZ*, p. 12..

itself a definite characteristic of Dasein's Being."[81] Thus, in contrast to other entities, "Dasein is in itself 'ontological'."[82]

Now, the reason this point is crucial, is that because Dasein already has an understanding of Being--is already ontological--Dasein itself emerges as that entity which shall provide Heidegger with access to the meaning of Being, to fundamental ontology. As Heidegger says, "...*fundamental ontology*, from which alone all other ontologies can take their rise, must be sought in the *existential analytic of Dasein*."[83] What Heidegger means by "existential" here is not the same as what he calls "Dasein's ontical 'affairs',"[84] that is, our actual decisions and "experiences" in daily existence, and our various scientific methods (i.e. anthropology, psychology, or biology) for understanding them. "The understanding of oneself which leads *along this way* we call "*existentiell*"."[85] Rather, not surprisingly, Heidegger is concerned with the more fundamental *existential*, or better,

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[81]*BT.*, p. 32, *SZ*, p. 12. This is Heidegger's Platonic solution to the traditional problem of knowledge: *Either* we do not know that which we seek, in which case, our inquiry appears to be blind and impossible (for how would we know we had found the object of inquiry?), *or* we do know that which we seek, in which case the inquiry is unnecessary. Heidegger's solution is Platonic because, like Plato, Heidegger thinks that the real "problem" is the posing of the issue in terms of an *either/or* framework. Thus, both Plato and Heidegger pose the issue in terms of a *both/and* framework. In terms of Plato's theory of *anamnesis*, we *both* do not know that which we seek, *and* we do know--albeit vaguely--that which we seek. It is our vague recollection of objects of knowledge which motivates a sort of "fine tuning" of this recollection. Similarly, for Heidegger, that which is sought--the meaning of Being--is always already understood by us, but because such understanding is *vague*, the inquiry must seek to render transparent the *Being* of Dasein. For Plato's posing of the issue, see *Protagoras and Meno*, trans., by W.K.C. Guthrie, (London: Penguin Books Ltd., 1956), pp. 127-128.

[82]*BT.*, p. 34, *SZ*, p. 13..

[83]*BT.*, p. 34, *SZ*, p. 13.

[84]*BT.*, p. 33, *SZ*, p. 12..

[85]*BT.*, p. 33, *SZ*, p. 12.

ontological structures of Dasein[86] which precede and make possible any 'decision,''experience,' or scientific endeavour to understand our decisions and experiences in the first place. The theme of Heidegger's inquiry thus becomes one of laying bare the ontological structure of Dasein *a priori*, the basic state of which, Heidegger calls "*Being-in-the-world*."[87]

This point leads to the second point of concern, and one which we have not yet properly discussed, namely, the meaning of the notion of "being-in-the-world." By characterizing Dasein as being-in-the-world, Heidegger breaks with the tradition in philosophy, since Descartes, which considers the fundamental human relationship with the world to be a dualism or correspondence between, on the one hand, the forms immanent to the bare *ego cogito* or thinking spectator who seeks certain knowledge of the "world of physical objects,"[88] and on the other hand, the contingent world of physical objects itself. Indeed, for Heidegger, "a bare subject without a world never 'is' proximally, nor is it ever given."[89] Rather, "the world of Dasein is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]."[90] As such, the human

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[86]It is important to note here that by "the ontological structures of Dasein" I do not mean something like the "immanent structures of subjectivity" of the Kantian or Husserlian variety. Dasein is not merely a subject or an ego. Rather, the ontological structures of Dasein are transcending structures which always go beyond to situate Dasein; Dasein is merely the *individual* locus for the "happening," the "being-there" of those structures. As the "being-there" of these transcending structures, Dasein, in *its* ontological structure, its modes of Being, always already *is* the possibility of transcendence. Thus, not only may one speak of "the ontological structures of Dasein," but equally, one must speak of "the Dasein of the ontological structures."

[87]*BT*., p. 78, *SZ*, p. 53.

[88]Stephen Mulhall, *Heidegger and Being and Time*, (London: Routledge, 1996), p. 39.

[89]*BT*., p. 152, *SZ*, p. 116.

[90]*BT*, p. 155, *SZ*, p. 118.

self is always already a *contextual* or situated self who is pragmatically engaged in and with a "world." Heidegger says that the Being of Dasein is *care* [*Sorge*],[91] or in other words, that Dasein's essential relation with the world is one of *concern* [*Besorge*].[92] Dasein is essentially implicated in the world, and as such a "for-the-sake-of-which."[93] "Dasein," says Heidegger, "in so far as it *is*, has always submitted itself already to a 'world' which it encounters, and this *submission* belongs essentially to its Being."[94] Heidegger's use of the word, "Dasein," which means "being-there," or "there-being," is a deliberate attempt to show how the human self is not merely a product of the Cartesian formula, "*cogito me cogitare, ergo sum*," a formula which, having withdrawn from the world, essentially concentrates "on the thinking activity itself,"[95] but rather, it is a being which is always already absorbed in and "thrown" into a "world" or englobing context of human "purposes and projects."[96] Before any positing of objects made by a spectator-subject (which itself must be posited), the human self, as Dasein, is an *active* self with concernful "'*dealings*' *in* the world and *with* entities within-the-world," entities which Heidegger refers to as "*equipment*."[97] As equipment, entities within the world are not first of all encountered by us as "mere things"[98] of theoretical contemplation (what Heidegger calls "present-at-hand"), but rather as things which are first of all used and manipulated

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[91]*BT*., p. 84, *SZ*, p. 57. Also see Chapter VI of Division I.
[92]*BT*., p. 84, *SZ*, p. 57.
[93]*BT*., p. 117, *SZ*, p. 84.
[94]*BT*., p. 121, *SZ*, p. 87.
[95]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 52.
[96]Harrison Hall, "The Other Minds Problem in Early Heidegger," *Human Studies*, v. 3, (1980), p. 248.
[97]*BT*., pp. 95-97, *SZ*, pp. 67-69.
[98]*BT*., p. 97, *SZ*, p. 69..

according to our circumspective, purposive activity[99] in-the-world (what Heidegger calls ready-to-hand). Moreover, "there 'is' no such thing as *an* equipment."[100] Rather, equipment "always is *in terms of* [*aus*] its belonging to other equipment."[101] Equipment and our use of equipment, always presupposes, and so points to, an interpretive context within which equipment and our use of it is first of all intelligible, a context into which we are always already "thrown." This pen, for example, is first of all not an object of theoretical contemplation, merely a collection of molecules arranged in a certain way (though this is one, albeit a derivative way of understanding the pen). Rather, the pen is first of all an "in-order-to" or something "we seize hold of" and use;"[102] the pen means something to us, and, in our ontic affairs, for the most part taking this meaning for granted, we employ it accordingly. But ontologically, as equipment, the pen also points or refers to an englobing interpretive context and "totality of equipment" within which the pen, and our use or misuse of the pen, is meaningful. For example, this pen is the historical product of the need of various ancient cultures to record and tell *others* about their existence, thereby granting some degree of permanence, and so meaning, to their lives. This pen presupposes a language and the various means of communicating that language in writing. This pen, at least in the present context, presupposes the project of

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[99]By "purposive" here I do not mean the kind of activity characteristic of Hegelian rational self-determination, where, properly speaking, all "purposive" activity is instrumental in bringing about the *telos* of human being, Reason. Rather, as "concernful," human activity is purposive in the sense that it is always absorbed in some *meaningful* project, in "getting something done" in relation to what matters to us. In this sense it has nothing to do with some immanent teleology proper to human beings.

[100]*BT.*, p. 97, *SZ*, p. 69..

[101]*BT.*, p. 97, *SZ*, p. 69.

[102]BT., p. 98, *SZ*, p. 69.

"writing a thesis" as well as the sort of culture and society for whom "thesis writing" is a meaningful activity (whether it serves any "utility" is itself a derivative question which is also only meaningful in terms of the broader interpretive context). This pen is the product of a certain corporation, which itself is only meaningful in terms of a certain economic, political, ideological, and social context. Or on a more personal level, I may feel most comfortable using this pen; I am used to the way it feels in my hand, as well as the way in which the black ink flows freely for me when I am writing. It is more than a mere tool: it accompanies my solitary thinking and, in leaving behind its blackened trace on the page, preserves and so recreates the action of the silent dialogue between me and myself. And so on. There is thus no fixed and eternal essence to "pen" as such, an essence to be found in a "*world beyond* which exists God knows where."[103] Rather, its essence is its "equipmentality" or meaning, which in turn is determined by human projects and the englobing context of meaning which situates those projects.[104]

Ontologically and *a priori* then, Dasein is being-in-the-world, "a *unitary*

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[103]*EPR.*, p. 20.

[104]Another example of this point is the meaning of the "Coke" bottle in the movie, "The Gods Must be Crazy." In one meaning-context, the empty bottle points to an American beverage company, and its well known soft drink. It points to a western culture for whom the buying and selling of commodities like "Coke" is a meaningful activity. It also points to a consumer culture where an empty "Coke" bottle is useless and nothing but refuse to be thrown wherever one wants, in this case, out of an aeroplane and onto the head of an unsuspecting African Bushman. With that action, the meaning-context of the bottle changes drastically. In terms of the Bushman's meaning-context, the bottle, presumably something he's never seen before, is somehow sent from the gods, and no matter how much he tries to be rid of this strange, hard object (which caused him such pain!), it somehow reappears again and again, as if the gods were crazy. The point here is that in either context--the "Coke" drinker in the plane or the Bushman--the empty bottle, labelled "Coke," *essentially* means something different.

phenomenon."[105] The self for Heidegger is not merely an *ego cogito*, but rather, it *is* its meaningful existence in an englobing and interhuman, interpretive context. Having provisionally shown *that* the basic state of Dasein is being-in-the-world, however, Heidegger's next move is to analytically show *how* this is the case, that is, how different *possibilities* of existence go to make up our being-in-the-world. If what Heidegger seeks is the meaning of Being, and if that meaning is accessible by way of an analytic of Dasein and the ontological structures which both situate and constitute *its* Being, then Heidegger must investigate the ways in which Dasein, in an ontic or average everyday sense, always already presupposes, and so vaguely "understands," those ontological structures, structures which only '*are*' in so far as Dasein '*is*.' This analytic project involves studying "being-in-the-world" in terms of "several constitutive items in its structure."[106] There are three such items which Heidegger investigates: the "*in the world*," "that *entity* which in every case has Being-in-the-world as the way in which it is" (the 'Who' of Dasein in its average everydayness), and "*Being-in*," or "Inhood" itself.[107] It is in the context of the second of these items--the 'Who' of Dasein--that Heidegger talks about Mitsein and Mitdasein. Accordingly, we may now turn to Heidegger's discussion of Mitsein and Mitdasein.

In section 25, Heidegger begins his discussion of the 'Who' of Dasein with the point that, as being-in-the-world, though Dasein's Being "is in each case mine," it has been

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[105]*BT*., p. 78, *SZ*, p. 53.
[106]*BT*., p. 78, *SZ*, p. 53..
[107]*BT*., p. 78-79, *SZ*, p. 53.

shown that "a bare subject without a world never 'is' proximally, nor is it ever given."[108] That Dasein "is in each case mine," does not mean that ultimately, Dasein is no different from a detached and self-enclosed *ego cogito*, an isolated "I"; rather, it simply means that each *individual* Dasein has its Being to be, whether it is "mine" or "yours," and that ultimately, each Dasein must face "*the possibility of the impossibility of any existence at all*,"[109] that is, its own death. This individuality of each Dasein, because it is a nonegological sense of individuality, does not preclude Heidegger's characterization of Dasein as being-in-the-world. It merely says that Dasein, as essentially a contextual self, is always *my*self or *your*self, but not an isolated "I." Heidegger interprets our relation with 'others' in terms of this contextual framework: "And so in the end an isolated "I" without Others is just as far from being proximally given."[110] However, Heidegger does not mean this merely in an ontic sense, that is, that in *actuality* I can only exist in so far as I occupy the same physical space as other people. To use an extreme example, the individual astronaut sent alone on a mission in outer space, does not thereby cease to be an *individual* Dasein just because she physically takes leave of other humans in a radical sense. Rather, Heidegger is here talking in an *ontological* sense about our being-with-others. Ontologically, we are the kind of beings who are *together* in inhabiting the world. In other words, for Heidegger, "'the Others' already *are there with us* [*mit da sind*] in Being-in-the-world."[111] Though *ontically* the astronaut may have radically distanced

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[108]*BT*., pp. 150-152, *SZ*, pp. 114-117.
[109]*BT*., p. 307, *SZ*, p. 262.
[110]*BT*., pp. 152, *SZ*, p. 116.
[111]*BT*., p. 152, *SZ*, p. 116.

herself from other actual selves, *ontologically*, as being-in-the-world, her very Being *is* in such a way as to *Be* always already in-the-world *with* others.

It is the above point which Heidegger discusses in section 26. Heidegger begins his discussion of 'Others' by noting that along with our pragmatic encounters with equipment "when one is at work," we also encounter "those Others for whom the 'work' ["Werk"] is destined..."[112] To use the example of the pen again, when one uses this pen to write a thesis on Hegel and Heidegger, one encounters those 'others' for whom and about whom one writes (a thesis committee, Hegel, Heidegger). Yet, it is important to note that these 'others' are not merely "added on in thought" to this pen we use; we do not merely use the pen, and then by inference, build a theoretical bridge to these others "over against whom the "I" stands out."[113] Rather, the inverse is the case. "Things" like this pen and this thesis "are encountered *from out of the world* in which they are ready-to-hand for Others--a world which is always mine too in advance."[114] We are always already concernfully situated in an interhuman "world" or interpretive context within which something like a pen, and our use of the pen, is meaningful. "The world of Dasein is a *with-world* [*Mitwelt*]," says Heidegger, "always one that I share with Others."[115] Here it is important to note that, as ontologically situated in a with-world, "Others" are not those against whom Dasein distinguishes itself. Instead, "they are rather those from whom, for

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[112]*BT*., p. 153, *SZ*, p. 117.

[113]*BT*., p. 154, *SZ*, p. 118.

[114]*BT*., p. 154, *SZ*, p. 118. My emphasis. The phrase "from out of the world" is crucial here because "world" is meant in an ontological sense. It refers to Dasein's concernful engagement in a context of meaning, or what is the same thing, being-in-the-world. Being-with-others is an essential part of Dasein as being-in-the-*world*.

[115]*BT*., p. 155, *SZ*, p. 118.

the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself--those among whom one is too."[116] It is on the basis of this with-world that any *actual* differentiation among Daseins is then made.

This point is easier to grasp if we note that as Mitsein, Dasein is originally and *essentially* being for the sake of others. As we saw in our discussion of being-in-the-world above, Dasein's relation to the ready-to-hand world of equipment was that of "care" or "concern." Dasein's mode of Being is a meaningful "*Being towards*"[117] this world of equipment, a being which is always, to some degree, circumspectively aware of the manifold assignments of such equipment's "equipmentality" in relation to a "world."[118] Similarly, *Dasein as Mitsein* also involves a concernful "Being towards," but its mode of Being in that case is not the same form of "concern"as that which deals with equipment, but a form of concern which cares for the well-being of the *Dasein* of others, what Heidegger calls "*solicitude*" ["Fuersorge"] towards others.[119] In this way, Dasein, as essentially Mitsein, "'is' essentially for the sake of Others."[120] As such, for Heidegger, just as concern was guided by a certain awareness or circumspection regarding one's dealings with equipment, "solicitude is guided by *considerateness* and *forbearance*," [*Ruecksicht* und *Nachsicht*].[121] To be sure, one's considerateness and forbearance can

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[116]*BT*., p. 154, *SZ*, p. 118.
[117]*BT*., p. 157, *SZ*, p. 121.
[118]*BT*, p. 98, *SZ*, p. 69.
[119]*BT*., p. 157n. 4. It is important to note the etymological relation between care [*Sorge*], concern [*Besorgen*], and solicitude [*Fuersorge*]. This is important because it shows how, while Dasein's Being is *in general* characterized by "care," in the *specific* case of "being-with-another," Dasein's Being is a certain kind of care which refers to the well-being or "welfare" of others. It is on the basis of Being-with as solicitude that "factical social arrangements" like "welfare work" are possible.
[120]*BT*., p. 160, *SZ*, p. 123..
[121]*BT*, p. 159, *SZ*, p. 123.

occur in various deficient or indifferent modes, to the point where one is thoughtlessly inconsiderate or indifferent concerning the other.[122] But Heidegger's point is that all such deficient and indifferent modes of being towards others always already presuppose an original being for the sake of others, characterized as solicitude. As solicitous, Dasein is always already the *possibility* of thoughtfully clearing the way for the existential possibilities, and so well-being, of the Dasein of others, whether or not Dasein *actually* does so.

Now, in order to make sense of this original "for the sake of Others," it is necessary to recall the meanings of Mitsein and Mitdasein. My Dasein, as a being-in-the-world, is essentially Mitsein. In reference to "the Others," Heidegger calls "their Being-in-themselves within-the-world" *Mitdasein*.[123] But here it is crucial to note that "their Being-in-themselves within-the-world" is noneother than the Mitsein of *their* Dasein. From their perspective, my own Dasein is "the other," or Mitdasein. What this means is that the Dasein of *every* self, as Mitsein, is simultaneosly the Mitdasein *of others* and *for others*. Dasein is thus Mitdasein in a double sense. As essentially Mitsein, always already caught up in an interhuman world, Dasein *is* always already the possibility of genuinely encountering the Dasein or lived experience of others, that is, the Mitdasein of others.[124] But equally, as Mitsein, Dasein *is* always already the possibility of being *encounterable for others* as Mitdasein. As Mitsein, Dasein is thus simultaneously always already open for

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[122]*BT*, p. 159, *SZ*, p. 123.

[123]*BT*, p. 155, *SZ*, p. 118.

[124]*BT*, pp. 160-161, *SZ*, p. 123. As Heidegger says, "Mitsein is such that the disclosedness of the Mitdasein of Others belongs to it; this means that because Dasein's Being is Mitsein, its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others."

the possibility of being freed for its existential possibilities by others, as well as open for the possibility of freeing the Dasein of others for *their* existential possibilities. In other words, Dasein as Mitsein is simultaneously the possible encountering of the Mitdasein *of others*, as well as the possibilityof being encounterable *for others*. This double sense of Mitdasein is inscribed as such in the being of the Dasein of every self, to the extent that the Dasein of every self is Mitsein. Heidegger himself provides evidence for this double sense of Mitdasein. As he says, "only so far as one's own Dasein has the essential structure of Mitsein, is it Mitdasein as encounterable for Others."[125] In addition, "Mitsein is such that the disclosedness of the Mitdasein of Others belongs to it; this means that because Dasein's Being is Mitsein, its understanding of Being already implies the understanding of Others."[126] It is in this original sense of the possibility of both being genuinely encounterable for others, as well as being the genuine encountering of others in *their* Dasein, *their* existential possibilities, that Dasein as a solicitous "for the sake of Others" is intelligible.

Thus, before *any* actual differentiation between selves, including one's own, and so before any ontic "encounter" between an enumerable aggregate of different selves, Dasein *is* originally Mitsein and Mitdasein, and as such, is the possibility of solicitous being for the sake of others. Indeed, this ontological structure is the condition for the possibility of

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[125]*BT*, p. 157, *SZ*, p. 121.

[126]*BT*, p. 160-161, *SZ*, p. 123. Another way of illustrating the double sense of Mitdasein is by focussing on the double sense of the phrase, "understanding of Others" as quoted above. On the one hand, this phrase refers to *Dasein's* understanding of others; on the other hand, it refers to *the Others'* understanding of Dasein. This double sense is only possible if, originally, the others are "those from whom, for the most part, one does *not* distinguish oneself--those among whom one is too." (ibid., p. 154; p. 118).

any ontic differentiation and interhuman encounter at all. It is only on the basis of Dasein's Being as Mitsein, that any encounter with another self or any enumerable aggregate of selves--or indeed the absence of such an encounter--is *possible*.

> Mitsein is an existential characteristic of Dasein even when factically no Other is present-at-hand or perceived. Even Dasein's Being-alone is Mitsein in the world. The Other can *be missing* only *in* and *for* a Mitsein.[127]

For Heidegger then, because we are *essentially* beings who are first of all concernfully and solicitously absorbed in an interhuman, interpretive context--a *with-world*--we are, in an *existential-ontological sense*, always already with others. Or, in other words, "so far as Dasein *is* at all, it has Being-with-one-another as its kind of Being."[128] It is here that our earlier discussion of the "ontological difference" and the temporal *a priori* are most relevant. As we have seen in the astronaut example, when Heidegger refers to Mitsein, he is not trying to show *ontically* that in fact one cannot be alone and still *Be*. Philosophy, for Heidegger, is not ontic, but *ontological*. As such, in terms of our interest in self and other, he is concerned with the temporal, ontological structures--self and other *a priori*-- which precede and make possible all *ontic* interhuman affairs, whether they are actual encounters or the absence of such encounters. What Heidegger calls "Mitsein" is just such an ontological structure, a structure which essentially *is* who we are, whether or not we *actually* are with others.

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[127]*BT*., p. 156-157, *SZ*, p. 120.
[128]*BT*., p. 163, *SZ*, p. 125.

The Defensibility of Heidegger's Account

Having said this however, Heidegger's ontological account of self and other must yet confront the following question, a question which was already posed at the beginning of this chapter: If Heidegger's "thoughtfulness" concerning our comportment with others is more "original" than that of the metaphysical tradition--including Enlightenment thought--before him, then in what sense does such thoughtfulness avoid the will to dominate and control others, as well as the self-centered tendency to be indifferent concerning others? How does his *Denken* genuinely recognize human differences rather than obliterating them? We can answer these questions by responding to the following criticism of Heidegger's view: If for Heidegger the meaning of the self's relation with others has to do with other selves in so far as they are a *possibility* always already inscribed in our very being, then is Heidegger's attitude towards the being of *actual* others one of indifference? If other selves are simply an aspect of *my* ontological structure, *my* selfhood, then is there a sense in which actual encounters with other selves have no transformative significance for me, and so are not really encounters with *genuine* others, but in fact, only me encountering, or better *interpreting* myself? Is it possible for Heidegger, as a thinker who attempted to provide an "ontological analytic of the subjectivity of the subject,"[129] to avoid the charge that "all that matters ultimately is myself,"[130] to which one might add, "and not others?"

In view of Heidegger's own language and his preference for possibility over

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[129]*BT*, p. 45, *SZ*, p. 24.

[130]Hannah Arendt, "What is Existential Philosophy?," *Essays in Understanding*, ed., by Jerome Kohn, (New York: Harcourt Brace & Company), p. 181.

actuality, these questions must be taken seriously. In particular, it is important to consider what Heidegger has to say regarding Dasein's *authenticity*, *inauthenticity*, as well as Dasein's "authentic being-toward-death" as a "non-relational possibility." First, we shall consider how these terms, if interpreted incorrectly, may lead one to believe that ultimately, all that matters to Heidegger is the *solus ipse*. Secondly, we shall show that it is in fact on the basis of these terms, that Heidegger's account of selfhood and others may be defended against the charge of egocentrism and indifference towards the Being of Others.

To begin with, we need to clarify the notions of authenticity and inauthenticity. As we have seen, Dasein is "in each case mine." As individually "thrown" into a world, Dasein thus always has its Being to be, a being which Heidegger characterizes as understanding or interpretting. Dasein always in some sense understands itself--that is its being--but such understanding can either be authentic or inauthentic. As Heidegger says,

> Dasein always understands itself in terms of its existence--in terms of a possibility of itself: to be itself or not itself. Dasein has either chosen these possibilities itself, or got itself into them, or grown up in them already. Only the particular Dasein decides its existence, whether it does so by taking hold or by neglecting. The question of existence never gets straightened out except through existing itself.[131]

To take hold of one's existence and choose to live by one's *own* possibilities is to exist or understand oneself *authentically*. This means thoughtfully "owning up"to or "taking stock" of one's whole being and the context of possibilities within which one *is*. To lose oneself in "things" by neglecting one's existence and letting others choose the

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[131] *BT.*, p. 33.

possibilities by which one lives, is to exist or understand oneself *inauthentically*.[132] Having said this, Heidegger introduces another distinction, namely that authentic and inauthentic understanding can each be either "genuine or not genuine."[133] This in fact is a crucial distinction, for it helps us to see what authenticity and inauthenticity are *not*. For example, for Heidegger, it is not a question of being absolutely one or the other, as if one could have some objective standard for "authenticity" towards which one strives and then finally "achieves," thereby decisively leaving inauthentic, superficial existence behind. Nor is the authenticity/inauthenticity issue a normative issue of "good/bad,"where it is "bad" or ungenuine to be inauthentic and "good" or genuine to be authentic even if being "authentic" in this case refers to the "pathologically eccentric" or "extravagant grubbing about in one's soul."[134] Rather, Heidegger is telling us that *both* possibilities *as* possibilities, always already structure our very Being because Dasein is first of all one's own, to be subsequently "lost" or "won back." For Heidegger, "firstly and mostly, we take ourselves much as daily life prompts,"[135] that is, in our average everydayness. As such, our understanding of ourselves is always in some sense genuinely inauthentic and cliche-ridden. To exist is in some sense always already to understand oneself inauthentically. We let others and their ontic criteria decide the way in which we understand ourselves and our world. We are in a sense dominated by the anonymous

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[132]*BPP*., p. 170. As Heidegger says: "Dasein can *choose itself on purpose* and determine its existence primarily and chiefly starting from that choice; that is, it can exist authentically. However, it can also let itself be determined in its being by others and thus exist *inauthentically* by existing primarily in forgetfulness of its own self."

[133]*BT*, p. 186, *SZ*, 146.

[134]*BPP*, p. 160.

[135]*BPP*, p. 160.

indifference of "the others," and in the absence of the genuine thought about ourselves for which Heidegger calls, we too tend to thoughtlessly dominate and be indifferent towards others. Thus, "we take pleasure and enjoy ourselves as *they* [*man*] take pleasure; we read, see, and judge about literature and art as *they* see and judge; likewise we shrink back from the 'great mass' as *they* shrink back; we find 'shocking' what *they* find shocking."[136] But such an inauthentic self-understanding is not necessarily ungenuine or negative. It can also be genuine. As Heidegger says,

> Inauthentic self-understanding experiences the authentic Dasein as such precisely in its peculiar "actuality," if we may so say, and in a genuine way. The genuine, actual, though inauthentic understanding of the self takes place in such a way that this self, the self of our thoughtlessly random, common, everyday existence, "reflects" itself to itself from out of that to which it has given itself over.[137]

In the same way, authentic understanding can either be genuine or ungenuine. We can either genuinely take hold of "the most proper and most extreme possibilities of our own existence," or else go astray, ungenuinely assuming that our ownmost possibilities lie in the abstract and "extravagant grubbing about in one's soul."[138]

What is crucial about authenticity and inauthenticity, is that taking hold of one's "ownmost potentiality-for-Being," that is, understanding oneself authentically-- "is only a modification but not a total obliteration of inauthenticity."[139] While we may come to understand and conduct ourselves more authentically, rather than merely in terms of our inauthentic, everyday existence, nonetheless, as finite beings who are always engaged in

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[136]*BT.*, p. 164.
[137]*BPP*, pp.160-161.
[138]*BPP*, p. 160.
[139]*BPP.*, p. 171.

everyday affairs with others, we cannot avoid being caught up in possibilities which have been determined for us by "the They." That is, there is no "escaping" inauthenticity; one can only exist authentically in relation to a prior inauthentic mode of existence, *and vice versa*. The reason Heidegger is interested in authenticity is not because it has some normative significance in itself, but rather, because his overall concern is with the question of the meaning of Being, a question which is illuminated and "answered" primarily through a thematic analysis of *Dasein's own* authentic self-understanding; that is, he is concerned to demonstrate the possibility that Dasein may or may not become authentically and thoughtfully aware of its primordial "indebtedness" and "responsibility" for the full range of the situatedness into which it is always already "thrown." An understanding of Being is disclosed in and through Dasein's own authentic understanding of itself as a being-in-the-world, who as such, *is* always already its "indebtedness" to a world which is essentially interhuman.

However this may be the case, what some commentators have found problematic in relation to Heidegger's discussion of authenticity/inauthenticity, is his later discussion of authenticity in terms of the "non-relational" possibility of "being-toward-death." Here, on the face of it, Heidegger appears to give an egological interpretation of Dasein, where, in facing up to the possibility of its *own* death, Dasein is authentically brought back to itself from the inauthenticity of "the They," and thereby radically individuated and concerned only with itself. Here we seem to have a reversal of the "problem of other minds," where "the problem" is how we come to know ourselves from out of the anonymity of "they-

self."[140] For example, Heidegger says, "*death, as the end of Dasein, is Dasein's ownmost possibility--non-relational, certain and as such indefinite, not to be outstripped.*"[141] As "ownmost," authentic being-toward-death wrenches Dasein "away from the "they"."[142] As "non-relational," being-toward-death "allows Dasein to understand that that potentiality-for-being in which its ownmost Being is an issue, must be taken over by Dasein alone."[143] *I* must face the possibility of *my* "impossibility," *my* death, and *who I am* in the "living out" of this possibility. As Heidegger continues:

> Death does not just 'belong' to one's own Dasein in an undifferentiated way; death *lays claim* to it as an *individual* Dasein. The non-relational character of death, as understood in anticipation, individualizes Dasein down to itself. This individualizing is a way in which the 'there' is disclosed for existence. It makes manifest that all Being-alongside the things with which we concern ourselves, and all Being-with Others, will fail us when our ownmost potentiality-for-Being is the issue. Dasein can be *authentically itself* only if it makes this possible for itself of its own accord.[144]

Thus, as Hannah Arendt has noted in reference to this "individualizing," it appears that "the essential character of the Self is its absolute Self-ness, its radical separation from all its fellows...Though death may be the end of *Dasein*, it is at the same time the guarantor that all that matters ultimately is myself,"[145] to which one might add, "and not Others." Given this characterization of Heidegger's position, it would seem that in the

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[140]Harrison Hall, "The Other Minds Problem in Early Heidegger," *Human Studies*, v. 3, (1980), p. 247.

[141]*BT.*, p. 303.

[142]*BT.*, p. 307.

[143]*BT.*, p. 308.

[144]*BT.*, p. 308.

[145]Hannah Arendt, "What Is Existential Philosophy?," p. 181.

end, despite all his efforts to undermine the "egocentric or self-possessed individualism"[146] of the metaphysical tradition before him, his fundamental ontology too slides into the same solipsistic trap which befell his predecessors.

The above conclusion, however, seems to forget that for Heidegger, while authentic Dasein "is in each case mine," it is *authentic* not because it has, like the stoic, willfully gathered itself up and closed itself off from the world, but rather, because, forsaking the possibility of being dominated by cliche-ridden standards of "the They," it thoughtfully becomes *open* and prepared for a proper understanding of *its* indebtedness to a world, its solicitous relation with others, and to the interpretive possibilities which that openness offers to Dasein as an interpretive being-in-the-world. In other words, Dasein becomes open for a "thinking that is not a willing." Thus, when our daily concernful dealings with the world and our solicitude towards others does tend to lead us away from an authentic understanding of our own being-in-the-world,

> this does not signify at all that these ways of Dasein have been cut off from its authentically Being-its-Self. As structures essential to Dasein's constitution, these have a share in conditioning the possibility of any existence whatsoever. Dasein is authentically itself only to the extent that, *as* concernful Being-alongside and solicitous Being-with, it projects itself upon its ownmost potentiality-for-Being rather than upon the possibility of the they-self.[147]

Authentic Being-its-Self therefore does not involve a detachment from everyday concerns and one's Being-with others, but rather, an *ontological understanding* of these essential structures of our being-in-the-world. In this regard, Heidegger's discussion of

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[146]Fred R. Dallmayr, "Heidegger on Intersubjectivity," p. 245.
[147]*BT*., p. 308.

self-understanding, being-toward-death and terms like "ownmost" and "non-relational" too has nothing to do with "egocentric or self-possessed individualism." Heidegger's account is not merely a reversal of the "problem of other minds," where in the end we are left with an isolated "I." Rather, Heidegger subverts that very framework: even though, in the possibility of hearing the "call of conscience,"[148] authentic Dasein may come back to itself from out of the lostness of "the They," what it comes back to is not a *self-enclosed ego cogito*, but a thrown, and so always "indebted" being-in-the-world.[149] Because authentic being-toward-death "lays claim" to Dasein, it "has a humbling and sobering effect" which pries "existence open for the sake of a genuine care for Being and a proper attentiveness to *Dasein's* 'potentiality for Being'."[150]

The importance of death and its disclosure of Dasein's "inebtedness" must be stressed. In its average everydayness, Dasein for the most part inauthentically understands itself and its world in terms of the way in which it deals with the ready-to-hand, that is, in terms of its being as a manipulator and dominator of "things," of beings. In this average everyday sense--a sense in which the greater duration of our life is lived--we remain deaf towards or "forget" the Being of these beings--ourselves included--because we understand the world, as well as others, as an ordering of beings "on hand" or "on call" for the purpose of our scientific manipulation and technological control. In this way, we naively understand the world and others as if they were "standing reserve"[151] for use in our

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[148]*BT*, p. 314, *SZ*, p. 269.
[149]*BT*, p. 329, *SZ*, p. 284.
[150]Fred R. Dallmayr, "Heidegger on Intersubjectivity," p. 245.
[151]Martin Heidegger, "The Question Concerning Technology," *Basic Writings*, p. 297-298.

egocentric, technological management of the world. It is precisely this kind of hubris which Heidegger wants to undermine by raising anew the question of Being.[152] The question of Being completely eludes all efforts of human management and control because it goes beyond to meaningfully situate them in our original, finite "indebtedness" for which this hubristic will to dominate and control is an inauthentic possibility, a "going astray" or "erring" in the first place. Thus the questioning of Being attempts to radically "think" the Being of beings *prior* to our naive and narrow understanding of beings in ontic terms of "standing reserve."

Now, the significance of being-toward-death as well as indebtedness in this regard, is that because death is Dasein's "uttermost possibility"[153] and so "lays claim" to Dasein's Being, Dasein "faces a domain which completely eludes human management, manipulation and domination."[154] As Heidegger says,

> Death, as possibility, gives Dasein nothing to be 'actualized', nothing which Dasein, as actual, could itself *be*. It is the possibility of the impossibility of every way of comporting oneself towards anything, of every way of existing. In the anticipation of this possibility it becomes 'greater and greater'; that is to say, the possibility reveals itself to be such

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[152]Commenting on this hubris in "On the Essence of Truth," *Basic Writings*, pp. 134-135, Heidegger writes that, forgetting the mystery of Dasein's Being "leaves historical man in the sphere of what is readily available to him, leaves him to his own resources. Thus left, humanity replenishes its 'world' on the basis of the latest needs and aims, and fills out that world by means of proposing and planning. From these man then takes his standards, forgetting being as a whole. He persists in them and continually supplies himself with new standards, yet without considering either the ground for taking up standards or the essence of what gives the standard. In spite of his advance to new standards and goals, man goes wrong as regards the essential genuineness of his standards. He is all the more mistaken the more exclusively he takes himself, as subject, to be the standard for all beings."

[153]*BT.*, p. 299.

[154]Fred R. Dallmayr, "Heidegger on Intersubjectivity," p. 245.

> that it knows no measure at all, no more or less, but signifies the possibility of the measureless impossibility of existence.[155]

What is crucial here is the notion that in the anticipation of one's death (i.e. authentic being-toward-death), one realizes that one's own being-toward-death--one's finite temporality--is a "measureless" mystery, and so not the fungible sort of entity which can be ordered as "standing reserve." In other words, in the anticipation of my own death, I am thrown back upon myself by a possibility which, though it is something I *must* face, is yet something before which I *must* surrender; that is to say, since my Being, which is always "on the way," could against my will, cease at any moment, it is always marked by a dimension of unmanagability and unpredictability.

The significance of this experience is that it forces Dasein to go beyond the ontic possibility of management, control, and indifference, and to hear the "call of conscience" back to the "there" [*Da*] or englobing interpretive context into which *Da*-sein is always already thrown. As Heidegger says, "this individualizing is a way in which the 'there' is disclosed for existence."[156] Primarily what is disclosed in the 'there' is our primordial and ineradicable human guilt or "indebtedness," what Heidegger calls *Schuld*.[157] As Heidegger says, "Dasein is something that has been thrown; it has been brought into its "there", but *not* of its own accord."[158] What this means is that Dasein "*owes* its existence to something that it is not itself,"[159] and that, so long as it *is* at all, it is in its very being always already

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[155]*BT*., p. 307.
[156]*BT*., p. 308.
[157]*BT*, pp. 325-348, pp. 352-358, *SZ*, pp. 280-301, pp. 305-310.
[158]*BT*, p. 329, *SZ*, p. 284.
[159]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. II, *Willing*, p. 184.

"indebted" to everything which pertains to its throwness, including others. In becoming aware of this indebtedness (something we may or may not do) one becomes aware of the full range of the interhuman situatedness to which one "owes" one's being, as well as the range of that situatedness for which one's own comportment always already has been responsible. It is on the basis of an awareness of this indebtedness that one is authentically capable of following one's ownmost possibilities and helping others to do the same. In this way, we can see how the "non-relational possibility" of being-toward death *opens up* a wider interpretive horizon within which one may understand oneself and one's relation with the world and Others, a horizon which lies beyond the mere possibilities of domination, control, and indifference. Authentic being-toward death thus prepares us for a "thinking that is not a willing." Though such an experience does not merely offer "better" strategies for existing in the world (for that would involve playing the management game again), its importance lies in its very questioning of management, control, and indifference, and its subsequent relegation of each of these modes of existence to *one possible, albeit abstract and deficient, mode of existence among many*.

What authentic being-toward-death and the subsequent thinking of indebtedness thus means in terms of selfhood and the other, is that, along with the questioning of management, control, and indifference, the isolated ego--the "foundation" of the effort to manage and control--is also called into question and situated ontologically as a concernful and solicitous being-in-the-world with others.[160] As a result, authentic selfhood has

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[160]*BT.*, p. 344. That authentic selfhood has to do with *contextual selfhood* as being-in-the-world, and not a self-enclosed ego, is made clear by Heidegger in his discussion of fact that authentic selfhood *resolutely* faces up to its Being as *care* in

nothing to do with the thesis that "all that ultimately matters is myself," where one's concern for the Being of others is merely reducible to the structures of one's own solipsistic ego. Rather, though others are indeed always already part of one's own Being (i.e. as Mitsein and Mitdasein), it is crucial to remember that for Heidegger, "one's own Being" is always *being-in-the-world*, an essentially contextual Being which is "individuated" only to the extent that every Dasein has its own "Being to be" and death towards which to live. Thus authentic being-toward-death throws Dasein back upon itself in such a way that, in understanding *its* implicatedness in and indebtedness to an interhuman, interpretive world, it likewise understands the implicatedness of *the Being of others* in the same world. "As a non-relational possibility," says Heidegger, "death individualizes--but only in such a manner that, as the possibility which is not to be outstripped, it makes Dasein, as Mitsein, have some understanding of the potentiality-for-Being of Others."[161] In this way, Dasein's *authentic* Being as Mitsein is not manifested in terms of the management and control of the other as an ontic "*what*" of "standing-reserve," nor in terms of an egoistic indifference towards others, but rather, in terms of the possibility of thoughtfully resolving to "help the Other to become transparent to himself *in* his care and to become *free for* it."[162] Thus, as Fred Dallmayr has noted,

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relation to a ready-to-hand world and its Being-with Others. As Heidegger writes: "Resolutness, as *authentic Being-one's-Self*, does not detach Dasein from its world, nor does it isolate it so that it becomes a free-floating "I". And how should it, when resoluteness as authentic disclosedness, is *authentically* nothing else than *Being-in-the-world*? Resoluteness brings the Self right into its current concernful Being-alongside what is ready-to-hand, and pushes it into solicitous Being with Others."

[161]*BT.*, p. 309.

[162]*BT.*, p. 159.

> Forsaking manipulation and mastery, genuine solicitude manifests itself in "letting be," that is, in the willingness to let others live their lives and anticipate their death--an attitude which is far removed from indifference.[163]

This attitude of "letting be" is "far removed from indifference" because it involves a thoughtful "resolve"or "commitment" that in one's own meaningful comportment in the world, one *not* thoughtlessly exist in such a way that one dominates and manipulates the other's possibilities of Being; as such, this attitude, because it is *attentive* to the being of the other, as Heidegger suggests above, does not just turn away and distance oneself from the other. Rather, as aware of the full import of its shared communality with the other, it *helps* the other become free for its *own* interpretive possibilities or potentialities of Being. To let the other be is to understand the other, not in ontic terms of a static "what," but rather, ontologically as another *temporal, thrown Being*, another Dasein who, with its Being to be, shares with me (and others) the task of "owning up" to the full range of its indebtedness to its interhuman, interpretive context.

Before any questions of what we ought to do or not do with respect to others--questions which in any case are inevitably "cashed out" in terms of techniques of management and control-- Heidegger is primarily concerned with the possibility of taking a "step back" from one's everyday way of dealing with things, and thoughtfully "taking stock" of, or "owning up" to one's being as a whole, a being *which is always already implicated in the projects and possibilities of others*. Heidegger's refusal to include an account of *actual* encounters in his account of selfhood and the other is thus not an egocentric failure of thought. It is quite the contrary. He does not want to attempt to

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[163]Fred R. Dallmayr, "Heidegger on Intersubjectivity," p. 245.

merely understand *actual* encounters, because, in his view, such attempts always understand others in terms of an "identity" or "what,"for use in efforts at "interhuman management"[164] and control. This concern with identity, so thought Heidegger, was what prevented Hegel from properly being attentive to the finitude of selfhood and the human other. In addition, Heidegger does not want to subsume selfhood and the other under a "research program" which then attempts to understand "community behaviour" for the larger purpose of "social engineering" or "community management." Nor is Heidegger concerned with recognizing finite human differences by laying out a normative ethical theory or prescriptions concerning our actions. Nor then does his thinking on self and other justify an urge to indifferently "live and let live." Heidegger is at pains to show us that "you cannot do anything with philosophy,"[165] and that for him, philosophy is concerned with articulating contexts of *possibilities*, not actual, contingent projects or prescriptions which presuppose these possibilities. As Heidegger says, "...philosophy will not be able to effect an immediate transformation of the present condition of the world. This is not only true of philosophy, but of all merely human thought and endeavor."[166] Instead, says Heidegger, "granted that *we* cannot do anything with philosophy, might not philosophy, if we concern ourselves with it, do something *with us*?"[167] What then might Heidegger's version of radical philosophy "do with us" in terms of recognizing human differences? As we have seen in the course of this chapter, in taking an ontological "step

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[164]Fred R. Dallmayr, "Heidegger on Intersubjectivity," p. 245.

[165]Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*. New Haven and London: Yale University Press, 1959, p. 12.

[166]Martin Heidegger, "'Only a God Can Save Us,'" p. 107

[167]Martin Heidegger, *An Introduction to Metaphysics*, p.12.

back" from our ontic engagement in everyday affairs, radical philosophical thinking opens us to a genuine and englobing awareness of our own indebtedness to a finite, *a priori* context of meaning which always already includes the Dasein of others, and which always already constitutes our own being-in-the-world. If Heidegger is concerned with genuinely recognizing human differences, he is concerned to do so *philosophically*, which is to say, *ontologically*, and not ontically in terms of an ethical theory or an account of action. Still the philosopher, like Hegel, Heidegger is concerned to make us radically aware of the englobing contexts of possibilities within which human differences may meaningfully appear, and so be recognized as such. But unlike Hegel, Heidegger does not think these "contexts of possibilities" in terms of an absolute self-identity, where what is philosophically important is this self-identity, and not particular differences; rather Heidegger insists on the ineradicable difference between the finite "contexts of possibilities" which always already situate us on the one hand, and our finite, interpretive self-making within these contexts, on the other hand. In this sense, Heidegger thought that he had more radically "thought" human finitude than Hegel. Beyond the thoughtful explication of our finite, "englobing contexts of possibilities," however, what we actually do in the world with others always involves a "leap of faith." We may, as Heidegger says, either "leap in" for the other, taking over her existence, and therefore dominating her--a "leaping" which is "to a large extent determinative for Being with one another"--or we may thoughtfully "leap ahead" of the other, and anticipating the whole of her being, a whole which always extends beyond one's own limited estimation of her being, help her to be "free" for an understanding of her whole being by not dominating or being indifferent

towards possibilities which pertain to her as a unique individual.[168] In either case, however, these modes of Being with one another always involve "leaps" from the non-willing silence and the solitude of the philosophical "step back," once again into the contingent realm of ontic affairs, a realm which, as Heidegger clearly saw, is nowadays largely determined by the indifference of possesive individualism and the technological will to dominate others. The danger is that in "leaping" away from the solitude of thinking, from a "thinking that is not a willing," and into concrete action with others in the world, we unavoidably get caught up in the technological will to dominate others which is essentially determinative for this world. But Heidegger clearly saw that this was our modern predicament, and so not something we could *immediately* transform, certainly not through non-philosophical activity, which for him only intensifies this predicament, nor through philosophical thought itself, which, as always enframed in the technological will to dominate, a will which has "forgotten" and continues to forget its unthought essence (i.e. the question of Being), faces the fact that "the greatness of what is to be thought is too great."[169] Rather, in terms of genuinely recognizing human differences, although Heidegger thought that "the sole possibility that is left for us is to prepare a sort of readiness, through thinking and poetizing,"[170] all that one can do is to silently "awaken the readiness of expectation"[171] for the *possibility* of a mediated effect of philosophy in the future. As Heidegger said in an interview 1976, "It may be that the path of thinking has

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[168]This is taken from *BT*, pp. 158-159, *SZ*, p. 122.
[169]Martin Heidegger, "Only a God Can Save Us," p. 116.
[170]Ibid., p. 107.
[171]Ibid., p. 107.

today reached a point where silence is required to preserve thinking from being all jammed up just within a year. It may also be that it will take 300 years for it 'to have an effect.'"[172]

[172]Ibid., pp. 109-110.

Chapter 3: Philosophy, Non-philosophy, and Human Differences

Introduction

Having explicated Hegel's and Heidegger's accounts of self and other in terms of their phenomenological accounts of situated self-making, and having seen that Heidegger considered his own account to be capable of more radically recognizing finite difference *as* difference than Hegel's account, this third and final chapter must answer two questions: First, in light of the confrontation between Hegel and Heidegger, what can we learn about what is at stake in any radical philosophical attempt to understand and recognize the human other in her difference? Is human difference as such, even intelligible within philosophy? What kind of "justice" is done, or recognition given, through the solitary, thinking activity alone? What are the limits of what the philosophical concern with intelligibility can "do with us" concerning the recognition of the unique voice of the human other? Secondly, is it intelligible to assert that beyond the solitary activity of philosophically "stepping back"and theoretically recognizing human differences, an adequate recognition of the plurality of human differences in fact also requires a non-philosophical practice? As Hannah Arendt suggests, might this non-philosophical practice be that of engaging in meaningful action and speech with the unique voices of those different humans with whom we are always already situated? Indeed, could it be the case that *without* this non-philosophical, public activity, the solitary philosophical activity actually runs the risk of being dangerously abstract and so unable to hear "the words and

the presence of others"[1] in their uniqueness? If so, what then is the relation between this non-philosophical activity and philosophical thought?

In order to respond to these questions, I first briefly sketch what I take to be the limits of philosophical thought with respect to recognizing human differences. In light of these limits, I then respond to the second question by briefly explicating Hannah Arendt's attempt to recognize the plurality of human differences, *both* through philosophical thought *and* non-philosophical action and speech.

Philosophy and Human Differences

What then are the limits of the philosophical recognition of human differences? The most important point to make in this regard is that, for both Hegel and Heidegger, philosophically recognizing human differences involves the solitary activity of thoughtfully "stepping back" and recognizing the ontologically original, transcending context which our own self-making presupposes and which is *that on the basis of which* any particular human differences may intelligibly come to be a theoretical issue as such, whether this ontological context is Hegel's absolute or Heidegger's more radically finite, interpretive context or "Being." This point is crucial. It may be the case that Heidegger's finite philosophical thought would open us to the possibility of meaningfully hearing the human other in her relevant, defining differences, and in a way that Hegel's absolute philosophical account could not do. Indeed, Chapter 2 shows how this might be the case. Nonetheless, my concern is that, however "radical" our philosophical thinking about the human other in

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[1]Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 49.

her particular differences might be, this philosophical form of recognizing the human other is nonetheless only a *silent* recognition in the solitary, reflective activity of *thought*, where we essentially withdraw from actual others in order to theoretically make explicit a transcending and true "sense of the whole." As such, it is a recognition or "redemption" of human differences, where we make explicit the presupposed, universal and transcending context of *shared* meaning in terms of which actual others first of all intelligibly appear in their difference and uniqueness.

In the case of Hegel's and Heidegger's accounts of situated self-making, we have seen what such philosophical reflection means for the recognition of the human other. For Hegel, philosophy or absolute thought which has transcended all finitude does not *merely* recognize the human *other* in her particular differences, but more fundamentally, it recognizes the other *human* in terms of her universal or absolute identity as rational self-making, as freedom, an identity which she shares with the totality of other humans in the modern era, and which is realized and preserved in the modern, constitutional state. For Hegel, it is only in such recognition that we overcome the indifference and domination of others[2] which results from the Enlightenment's abstract individualism. Thus, for Hegel, philosophical thought *absolutely* comprehends and explicates the *universal and necessary context* (i.e. the absolute) within which finite human differences are first of all intelligible, and so may appear as such to other rational beings. While philosophy for Hegel does not

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[2]It is important to make the point that the genitive must be taken in a double sense here. Not only may one overcome one's own will to dominate others, but conversely, because reason or freedom has been realized in the world, one can expect all others, as rationally self-making selves, to do the same.

merely obliterate particular human differences, Hegel's point is that, because philosophy as absolute thought always seeks the infinite and timeless universal (which *is* our historical self-realization), in terms of which to render finitude intelligible, a true philosophical recognition of the other human must be of what is universal to human being as such, namely rational self-making. It is only on the basis of the modern community of rationally self-making selves, that particular differences may intelligibly appear and be philosophically recognized in the first place.

Heidegger, in response to Hegel and the tradition preceding Hegel, attempted to recover an ontologically original form of philosophical thought which dispenses with the search for the infinite, unconditioned universal, and instead seeks a universal or englobing intelligibility (i.e. Being) which is radically temporal and finite. In this way, Heidegger thought that philosophical thought could prepare and enable us to essentially understand the finite, ontological sense in which we always already, solicitously share a common, historically situated, interpretive context with others, and that each one of us is, in our own way, *ineradicably indebted* to this interhuman context for our very being. For Heidegger, it is only in silently thinking the full meaning or "truth" of one's indebtedness to a finite interhuman context, that one may then be thoughtfully prepared for the *possibility* of dwelling in a solicitous way which does not obliterate the plurality of human differences, either through atomistic indifference or the abstract will to dominate others. In a finite philosophical thought, one might thus be more aware of the possibility of meaningfully hearing and recognizing "the words and the presence" of the finite, human other who, as a unique, interpretive self-making, always already shares a world with

oneself.

Nonetheless, however Heidegger's finite thought might have drawn philosophy closer to recognizing the finite human other in her unique differences, it is nonetheless crucial to note that as a *philosophical* account of selfhood as situated self-making, Heidegger's account, like Hegel's, does not seek to absolutely assert the *sheer difference* or uniqueness of the other and to celebrate the particularity of this difference or uniqueness entirely for its own sake. Radical philosophy or "phenomenology goes beyond an interest in 'mere' particularity."[3] Instead, Heidegger, like Hegel, is interested in making explicit the *truth* of particular differences in terms of a *transcending context*, though for Heidegger, this transcending context is radically finite and historical. Indeed, for both Hegel and Heidegger, who thought that ontologically, selfhood *is* the original *mutuality*, not mere difference, of self and other, any absolute assertion of difference would not only be unintelligible,[4] but in its absolute denial of commonality, it would also amount to another version of the abstract atomism they were attempting to undermine. As was noted above, both Hegel and Heidegger thought that for human differences to even be intelligible as something to philosophically "recognize" or "not recognize," the very notion of human *difference*, of self and other, must originally come to be *meaningful* in terms of

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[3]Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience: Human Science for an Action Sensitive Pedagogy*, (London, Ontario, Canada: The Althouse Press, 1990), p. 22.

[4]Another element of the unintelligibility of this absolute assertion of difference *as* difference, involves the very way in which the recognition of difference must be demanded in the political realm. Ironically, in order for difference to be recognized at all, such recognition must be demanded in terms of the very thing which was thought to obliterate difference in the first place, namely, an *identity* to which all others who are similarly "different" belong.

a transcending, *interhuman* context of intelligibility which we as self-making beings meaningfully "live through," and so in our everyday life both constitute and presuppose, whether it is Hegel's absolute, or Heidegger's "Being." In this view, even the sort of recognition of difference which is demanded by identity politics must first of all presuppose a prior commonality amongst the group's members.

It is important to keep in mind that, in their concern to recognize the finite relation between self-making and the human other, Hegel and Heidegger wanted to be more radical than any approach which attempts to understand the complexity of human plurality in terms of a generalized model or theory of human cognition, behaviour or "nature." Rather, they were concerned with making us aware of the more fundamental, *a priori*, situating context of intelligibility which all such approaches always presuppose, and within which "self" and "other," and so any notion of "difference," originally come to *be* as such. Yet such an awareness is not merely imposed upon us from the outside, so to speak. Rather, since each one of us always already makes ourselves on the basis of this context of intelligibility or hermeneutic situation, the truth of such intelligibility, and hence of ourselves, is always already available for philosophical or phenomenological appropriation, explication, and understanding.[5] Yet, since in our everyday existence, we too often only

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[5]It is important to point out the difference between Hegel and Heidegger here. For Hegel, insofar as we are absolute, rational self-making, we *must* reach this level of philosophical explication, which for Hegel is absolute self-recognition, or else the self will always be frustrated. Insofar as we are human selves at all, such philosophical comprehension and explication is *absolutely necessary*. For Heidegger, however, such philosophical explication, always finite, is only a *possibility* of our being as interpretive self-making. While for Heidegger, our very being always already presupposes a context of intelligibility, there is no rational necessity to make this intelligibility--and so our own being--explicit. For Heidegger, though such philosophical self-understanding may be

have a vague and abstract understanding of the truth of this englobing, lived intelligibility, an understanding which, like the Enlightenment's abstract individualism, always tends to conceal this truth and so restrict the possibility of a concrete, ontological understanding of our relation with the world, a radical philosophical thoughtfulness is indeed necessary or needful.[6] For Hegel, as we saw with his account of absolute self-making, one must be able to comprehend and give a philosophical explication of the truth of this intelligibility in the context of "the whole," the absolute, while for Heidegger, one's philosophical explication, because it is itself always finite and situated, reveals the truth of an ineradicably finite, englobing context of meaning, or Being. In either case, the very notion of *difference* is originally only intelligible in terms of a presupposed and transcending "sense of it all." In this view, it is thanks to the philosophical explication of this transcending "sense of it all," that the truth of human differences can be intelligibly understood, recognized and finally "given its due."

However, it is also the case that such theoretical explication is *all* that philosophy can ever do. If, in terms of Hegel's and Heidegger's accounts of self-making, philosophical thinking involves a "step back" from one's own finite experience, in order to give an ontologically original and intelligible account of the truth of that experience, philosophical thought is *nothing more* than this solitary and silent "step back" from one's everyday engagement with others, in order to thoughtfully prepare oneself for the possibility of finally "hearing" them in their fundamental being (whether it is as Hegelian

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"needful" [*Notwendigkeit*] for modern human beings, it is not a rational necessity, as it is for Hegel.

[6]Robert Burch, "On Phenomenology and its Practices," p. 191.

rational self-making, or Heideggerian interpretive self-making). When one "does" philosophy or phenomenology, one is merely attempting to make sense of the full range and englobing intelligibility of her own finite experience, by telling herself a compelling, ontologically fundamental story about who she *truly* is in relation with a world and others. As Isak Dinesen tell us, "all sorrows can be borne if you put them into a story or tell a story about them."[7] As such, radical philosophy or thought is not something which only professional philosophers, as distinguished from the opinionated "many,"[8] do; rather, it is the very way in which finite, self-making selves attempt to give an englobing account of their own finite experience and make sense of their lives. In this respect, radical philosophical thought begins and ends with the individual self who attempts to make sense and comprehend the truth of his or her *own* existence in a world with others. Insofar as each one of us thinks in this way, we may become more aware of the ways in which our own existence, for better or for worse, always already affects the unique being of others, and with how the existence of others always already affects our own being. However, while the radicality of the phenomenological "step back" may make us all (and not just professional philosophers) thoughtfully aware of the englobing context within which we as self-making selves are always already implicated in a context of human plurality, this awareness is all that philosophy can "do with us" in this regard.

In light of our current situation, however, with its emphasis on the indifference of abstract, possessive individualism, and the concomitant technological will to dominate the

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[7]Quoted in Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 155.
[8]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. 1, *Thinking*, p. 13.

world and others, a radical philosophical thoughtfulness, where we take the time to reflect and become aware of the englobing, ontological context of plurality within which we, in our lived experience, always already encounter "the words and the presence of others,"[9] may be precisely what is needed. This "need" is not one which is abstractly imposed, but rather, one which arises out of the fact that the prevailing standards for understanding ourselves and our relation with others, standards which we inherited from the isolated subjectivity and abstract, possessive individualism of the Enlightenment, are not "commensurate with lived experience"[10] as we, who are always already situated amidst a plurality of different human beings, actually live it. Because these standards immediately view human being as ontologically and epistemologically isolated from others, our uncritical acceptance of these standards is "the most reliable of all safeguards against the words and the presence of others," and the ability "to *think* from the standpoint of somebody else"[11] in their uniqueness. But if, as Hegel and Heidegger both realized, selves only come to *be* as selves in terms of an interhuman context, a human plurality, then we ought to be wary of any abstract "standard" of self-understanding which does not begin with, and so is not adequately attentive to, this fundamental context of human plurality. As essentially *thinking* beings, always implicated in a shared, interhuman world, we can ask no less from ourselves than that we, through the philosophical "step back," "become more thoughtfully or attentively aware of aspects of human life which hitherto were

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[9]Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 49.
[10]Robert Burch, "On Phenomenology and its Practices," p. 198.
[11]Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 49.

merely glossed over or taken-for-granted,"[12] and this means, in our present situation, philosophically recognizing ourselves and others, not in terms of abstract Enlightenment standards, but rather, in terms of the transcending, ontological context of plurality, within which other, unique human beings meaningfully appears to us, and within which we always already do the same. To engage in such philosophical thoughtfulness is to be attentive to the ways in which one's *own* being is always already implicated in the being of others, as well as the ways in which the being of others is always already implicated in one's own being. As such, this thoughtfulness, because it necessarily involves going beyond our own finite particularity to comprehend an interhuman, sense of the whole, may also make each one of us aware of the concrete *implications*, not only of what we always already do in the world, but of the various possibilities for action which are always already available to us as we project ourselves into a plural world. As such, *before* we do actually act or not act in the world, we may, rather than thoughtlessly perpetuate the indifference of abstract individualism or the technological will to dominate the being of others, take a *silent* and thoughtful "step back" from our everyday affairs, in order to "*think* from the standpoint of somebody else,"[13] and to reflect on the implications of one's own being for the unique being of this "somebody else," as well as the implications of the unique being of this "somebody else" for one's own being. It is in this sense that the solitary and silent "step back" of philosophical thought may recognize or "do justice" to the unique voice of the human other. Nevertheless, how such solitary thought shapes the way in which we

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[12]Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, p. 154.
[13]Hannah Arendt, *Eichmann in Jerusalem*, p. 49.

might *actually* recognize the unique voice of the other in our "non-philosophical," everyday, public existence is, however, another question. On this point, all that we can say of such thoughtfulness is that it

> will *more likely bring us to the edge* of speaking up, speaking out, or decisively acting in social situations that ask for such action. And while phenomenology as form of inquiry does not prescribe any particular political agenda suited for the social historical circumstances of a particular group or social class, the thoughtfulness phenomenology sponsors is more likely to lead to an indignation, concern, or commitment that, if appropriate, may prompt us to turn to such political agenda.[14]

Such a silent and thoughtful readiness to hear the unique or different voices of others, and to thereby open the *possibility* of appropriately responding to others in their uniqueness, is the most "work" which philosophical thought as phenomenology can do. At the same time, however, from the perspective of such philosophy, especially as was the case with Heidegger, it is *only* through such thoughtfulness that others in their uniqueness or difference, can be genuinely recognized for the first time. Although the silent withdrawal of philosophical thought may increase the *likelihood* of our ability to hear and actually respond to the voices of others who *ask* for our response, as soon as we cease our solitary philosophical reflection, and "step back" into the complications of the "non-philosophical,"everyday, public world, we are just as likely to once again get so caught up in "standardized codes of expression and conduct," that once again, the result is "the arbitrary domination of all others, or, as in Stoicism, the exchange of the real world for an imaginary one where these others would simply not exist."[15] In this view, as we saw with

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[14]Max van Manen, *Researching Lived Experience*, p. 154. My emphasis.
[15]Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 211.

Heidegger, who had attempted to be more radical than Hegel in philosophically recognizing human finitude, the finite human other is ultimately only recognized and "given its due" in the silent and solitary activity of a "thinking that is not a willing,"[16] in philosophical thought. It is only in a silent and thoughtful *withdrawal* from our actual dealings with others, dealings where we are always likely to either dominate or be indifferent towards others, that we for the first time come to recognize those others in their uniqueness and finite differences. Thus, while it has been shown that for philosophy, finite human difference can only be recognized in terms of universal, interhuman contexts of intelligibility (i.e. Hegel's absolute, Heidegger's Being) which the silent "step back" of philosophy makes explicit, it is also the case that, on philosophy's own terms, human difference is as a rule always "glossed over" and so not "given its due" in the "non-philosophical" realm of everyday human action and public affairs, where we are always engaged with a plurality of other human beings. In this view, it is only in the silent and solitary thoughtfulness of philosophy that finite human difference can be "rescued" from the folly of everyday, "non-philosophical" human activity and be genuinely recognized for the first time.

Such then are the "limits" of the philosophical recognition of human difference. Having said this, however, it is necessary to confront a second question, a question which focuses on the relation between such philosophical recognition of others, and the "non-philosophical" realm of everyday human action, where we are always already engaged with a plurality of other human beings. As we have seen, both Hegel's and Heidegger's

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[16]Heidegger in Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. II, *Willing*, p. 178.

philosophical accounts of self and other show that ontologically, the human condition is one of *plurality*; each one of us comes to be who we are as a unique self in relation to a plural context of other unique selves. As such, "we are all the same, that is human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live."[17] Now, the question that must be posed, is whether it is through the silent and solitary activity of *thought* alone that such plurality can be recognized? Is the *silence and solitude* of philosophy adequately attentive to the unique voices of others? If everything we do, and hence everything we *are*, occurs in the context of human plurality, then does the philosophical activity of being silent and *withdrawing* from such plurality, *by itself* adequately recognize the particular differences inherent to such plurality? Indeed, *who* decides whether the difference of the other is recognized? Is the arbiter in this issue something other than just philosophy? If philosophical recognition essentially involves an *individual* withdrawal from the "non-philosophical" realm of plurality, in order to engage in a silent dialogue with *oneself*, then how "genuine" is the recognition of human difference which philosophy provides? Without impugning the value of a theoretical or philosophical recognition of human difference, might it be the case that an engagement with *actual* others through non-philosophical action and speech is also what is required in order to genuinely disclose, and so do justice to, the finite differences inherent in human plurality? Might it be the case that, without such non-philosophical activity, an activity whereby we "face up" to the claim actual others have on us by virtue of our inescapable co-existence in a world, our comportment with and thinking about these others might run

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[17]Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 10.

the risk of being dangerously oblivious to the voices of those others in their unique being? Does the genuine recognition of human difference require a dialogue, and perhaps even an inescapable tension, between the thoughtfulness of philosophy and non-philosophical action and discourse, a dialogue whereby each informs the other? If so, how might such a dialogue be intelligible?

In order to respond to these questions, I shall briefly outline a possibility offered by Hannah Arendt in her discussions of the relation between thought and action. As we shall see, Arendt's own thought on these matters does not provide us with a compact political theory or a neat synthesis of thought and action, but rather, in recognizing the need for *both* the solitude of thought *and* non-philosophical action and public discourse, she always hovers somewhere between these possibilities, recognizing that the escape from either one would mean the loss of our very humanity.

Hannah Arendt: Thought, Action, and Human Plurality

In Hannah Arendt's view, *both* the solitude of thought *and* non-philosophical action and discourse are necessary for recognizing the plurality of unique human beings. Let us see how this view is intelligible.

Like Hegel and Heidegger, Arendt thought that we are always already situated in an interhuman world, a human plurality and "web of human relationships"[18] where "we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else

[18]Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 163.

who ever lived, lives, or will live."[19] Indeed, this concern with recognizing the condition and implications of human plurality was central to all of Arendt's thought. Arendt too was concerned with undermining the Enlightenment conception of human being as an isolated subject and abstract, possessive individual. In this endeavour, she was concerned to recognize the implications of the fact that we are always already implicated in a world where we appear to each other as unique beings. In this sense, Arendt's philosophical concerns were similar to those of Hegel and Heidegger.

However, what is crucial to recognize for our purposes, is that, while Arendt, like Hegel and Heidegger, was concerned to philosophically recognize and explicate the *meaning* of the condition of human plurality, it is important to understand that Arendt's own manner of understanding this meaning differed from the essentially *truth-seeking* perspectives of Hegel and Heidegger. This point is crucial. As we have seen, for Hegel and Heidegger, it is only through the solitary and silent, philosophical "step back" that the plurality of human differences are meaningfully recognized. However, for both of them, philosophy does not seek just any contingent meaning, but rather, the *truth* of this plurality, either in terms of Hegel's "absolute" or Heidegger's "Being." "The True is the whole,"[20] says Hegel, and Heidegger, in commenting on his raising of the question of the meaning of Being in *Being and Time*, says that "'Meaning of Being' and 'Truth of Being' say the same."[21] For Arendt, the philosophical thinking of both Hegel and Heidegger is problemmatic because, in the solitary quest for "the absolute" or "Being," it commits "the

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[19]Ibid, p. 10.
[20]*PhS.*, p. 11.
[21]Quoted in Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 15.

basic fallacy, taking precedence over all specific metaphysical fallacies," namely "to interpret meaning on the model of truth."[22] As such, for Arendt, thinkers like Hegel and Heidegger "believed in all earnest that the results of their speculations possessed the same kind of validity as the results of cognitive processes."[23] In Arendt's view, the problem with such a conflation between meaning and truth is that, in its concern to reveal a "truth" which we "are not free to reject,"[24] it loses sight of the fact that philosophical thinking is rooted in questions which are of the utmost existential interest to human beings, questions which always seek the *meaning* of human existence, and which, because of our inescapable finitude, do not seek answers which are either "true" nor "false." In other words, such a conflation loses sight of the fact that philosophical thinking is concerned with a realm where verifiable answers and knowledge are out of place, and where what ultimately matters is what human existence *means* to each one of us.

Now, what this means for Arendt is that "philosophical thoughtfulness" itself actually means something quite different from what it did for Hegel and Heidegger. Drawing on the Kantian distinction between *Vernunft* or reason, which seeks the *meaning* of human existence or experience, and *Verstand* or intellect, which seeks to establish *truth* through cognition and compelling evidence, Arendt claimed that the need of philosophical thinking or reason is not primarily or exclusively in seeking *truth*, as it was for Hegel and Heidegger, but rather, in always seeking that which does not admit of any final, absolutely

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[22]Ibid., p. 15.
[23]Ibid., p. 16.
[24]Ibid., p. 59.

compelling or verifiable answer, namely, the *meaning* of human experience.[25] For Arendt, to "step back" and think about our experience amidst a human plurality is not merely to search for the truth or falsity of this experience, but rather, to tell ourselves stories which reflect what that experience fundamentally *means* to us *as we live it*, stories which in fact serve to situate our claims to truth. In this way, for Arendt, the stories we tell are comprehensive, totalizing, and serve to make explicit the fundamental sense in which we come to be integral selves in relation with a world. Yet for Arendt, there is neither an Hegelian closure of such story-telling in absolute knowledge, nor is there one fundamental story to be told, as in Heidegger's history of Being. Rather, because Arendt is fundamentally concerned with the meaning of human experience, the philosophical project of story-telling, like our own uncertain existence, is always open-ended and ongoing. For Arendt, it is only by recognizing that philosophical thinking is not concerned primarily or exclusively with truth, but with the meaning of human experience, that we may then thoughtfully be in a position to radically understand and recognize the meaning of our communicative engagement with others.

Now, in order to understand Arendt's contribution to the recognition of human plurality and difference, and to understand why she thought that non-philosophical action and speech was also necessary for such recognition, it is first of all necessary to more closely examine Arendt's own views on the role of philosophical thought as a necessary, *though not sufficient*, element in the recognition of the plurality of unique persons.

It is important to recognize that Arendt's own thinking on the issue of human

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[25]Ibid., p. 13-15.

plurality was her way of responding to certain dramatic events of her time, the most significant of which was the emergence of National Socialism in Germany and Stalinism in the Soviet Union.[26] It is against the backdrop of these events that one must understand her own urgent call to recognize the full meaning of our human plurality through *both* thought and action. In Arendt's view, the horror of National Socialism and the apparent ease with which so many individuals carried out such monstrous and evil deeds against their fellow humans, testified to a profound *thoughtlessness* on the part of the perpetrators, where, in adhering to "conventional, standardized codes of expression and conduct," they had completely lost the inclination to "*stop* and think,"[27] about the meaning and consequences of their actions in relation to the plurality of other persons with whom they are always already situated. For Arendt, the paradigmatic figure of such "thoughtlessness," was Adolph Eichmann.[28] In Arendt's view, although Eichmann and a great many others were responsible for the most monstrous and demonic of deeds--the expulsion, internment, and killing of millions of Jews--these people, so thought Arendt, were not themselves demonic or monstrous, but rather, people who exhibited an "absence of thinking," and in this respect were "quite ordinary" and "commonplace."[29] It was this ordinariness which Arendt called "the banality of evil." As such, it was in her last work, *The Life of the Mind*, that Arendt, on the issue of evil, came to explicitly question the

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[26]Arendt's most famous treatment of the meaning of these events for our modern age is her *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, (San Diego/New York/ London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, Publishers, 1951).

[27]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 4.

[28]Ibid, vol I, *Thinking*, p. 3-4. Also see her *Eichmann in Jerusalem*.

[29]Ibid, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 4.

relation between thought and human action. There, she asked, "might the problem of good and evil, our faculty of telling right from wrong, be connected with our faculty of thought?"[30]

> Could the activity of thinking as such, the habit of examining whatever happens to come to pass or to attract attention, regardless of results and specific content, could this activity be among the conditions that make men abstain from evil-doing or even actually "condition" them against it?[31]

Indeed, Arendt had already hinted at an answer to this question in her book, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*. There, writing in the aftermath of two world wars, and the alarming growth of totalitarianism, Arendt counselled neither an optimistic embrace of progress through the prevailing, "totalitarian attempt at global conquest," nor an equally popular, powerless acceptance of the doom that awaits us, but rather, a resolve to *comprehend* and face up to our situation. For Arendt, such a comprehension means

> examining and bearing consciously the burden which our century has placed on us--neither in denying its existence nor submitting meekly to its weight. Comprehension, in short, means the unpremeditated, attentive facing up to, and resisting of, reality--whatever it may be.[32]

In other words, if there is to be any hope of resisting the evil obliteration of human plurality--and so humanity as such--which, in its most extreme form, was exemplified by people like Eichmann, it is through an ability to "*stop* and think,"[33] and face up to the implications of our being in a human plurality. As such, this thoughtfulness is a sort of action. It is a definite stand one may take in response to a situation.

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[30]Ibid, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 5.
[31]Ibid, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 5.
[32]Arendt, *The Origins of Totalitarianism*, p., vii-viii.
[33]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 4.

> When everybody is swept away unthinkingly by what everybody else does and believes in, those who think are drawn out of hiding because their refusal to join is conspicuous and thereby a kind of action.[34]

What Arendt found to be so important about such thoughtfulness was that, in examining "the implications of unexamined opinions...values, doctrines, theories, and even convictions," and thereby destroying their hegemony, such thought "has a liberating effect on another human faculty, the faculty of judgement,"[35] which, unlike thought itself, which always deals with "invisibles, with representations of things that are absent,"[36] is able to judge particulars like "right" and "wrong," "beautiful" and "ugly." As Arendt writes,

> The manifestation of the wind of thought is no knowledge; it is the ability to tell right from wrong, beautiful from ugly. And this indeed may prevent catastrophes, at least for myself, in the rare moments when the chips are down.[37]

Indeed, Arendt went so far as to suggest that, "if...the ability to tell right from wrong should turn out to have anything to do with the ability to think, then we must be able to "demand" its exercise from every sane person, no matter how erudite or ignorant, intelligent or stupid, he may happen to be."[38] On these terms then, it is quite clear that, for Arendt, the recognition--if not the very survival--of the fundamental condition of humanity, human plurality, necessarily requires the ability to "stop and think," and philosophically comprehend the full meaning of one's being amidst that plurality. It is through such philosophical thought that we may "face up to" and resist reality, and in so

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[34]Hannah Arendt, "Thinking and Moral Considerations," *Social Research*, v. 38, (1971), p. 445-446.

[35]Ibid, p. 446.

[36]Ibid, p. 446.

[37]Ibid, p. 446.

[38]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 13.

doing, recognize those unique human beings with whom we always share a world.

Yet, if Arendt had thought so highly of the philosophical "stop and think," why did she nonetheless think that *by itself*, philosophy is not sufficient for recognizing human plurality? Why did she think that action and speech are also necessary? Indeed, why are *both* necessary? Two points are crucial here. First, while Arendt had understood the importance of solitary, philosophical thought for recognizing human plurality, she was also well aware of the possible dangers of the solitary "life of the mind." In particular, in 1933, Arendt had seen that even the most profound thoughtfulness could not prevent her friend and former teacher, Heidegger, from giving Hitler his support. In light of this incident, Arendt came to question whether, philosophical thought, "the soundless dialogue we carry on with ourselves,"[39] does not always run the risk of depriving us of our "common sense" concerning the actual web of human relationships which always already situate us. Here one is reminded of the story which Plato tells of a Thracian peasant girl who burst into laughter upon seeing Thales fall into a well while observing the stars above him.[40] While Thales was "eager to know the things in the sky...what was...just at his feet escaped him."[41] This is similar to a story which Kant told about Tycho de Brahe and his coachman:

> the astronomer had proposed that they take their bearings from the stars to find the shortest way during a night journey, and the coachman had replied: "My dear sir, you may know a lot about the heavenly bodies; but here on earth you are a fool."[42]

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[39]Ibid, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 6.
[40]Ibid, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 82.
[41]Plato in Ibid, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 82.
[42]Ibid, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 83.

Arendt's main worry concerning our engagement in the activity of philosophical thinking was that, in the silent withdrawal from the context of human plurality and the web of human relationships into the "soundless dialogue we carry on with ourselves," the danger is that like Thales and Tycho de Brahe, we become so removed from our everyday human plurality that we lose the everyday sense of this plurality. In the withdrawal from plural, human affairs, into the solitude and silence of philosophical thought, there is always the danger that "our feet will escape us," so that when we do decide to "step back" into plural, human affairs, we only succeed in misjudging our step and stumbling onto the feet of others. Or if we decide not to "step back," for fear of stepping on the feet of others, and instead resolve to recognize those others in the silence of thought, we may in fact do an injustice to those unique others who require not our thinking silence, but our willingness to speak out, take a stand, and engage in discourse for their sake. As a result of this concern with the solitude of philosophy, Arendt came to believe that, while philosophy could be nothing but the "soundless dialogue we carry on with ourselves," where we withdraw from human affairs and "stop and think," it would nonetheless have to make human plurality its subject matter, and so be wary of its *own* solitary activity in relation to the unique voices within that plurality. As she writes,

> Philosophy...will never be able to deny its origin in *thaumazein*, in the wonder at that which is as it is. If philosophers, despite their necessary estrangement from the everyday life of human affairs, were ever to arrive at a true political philosophy, they would have to make the plurality of man, out of which arises the whole realm of human affairs--in its grandeur and misery--the object of their *thaumadzein*. Biblically speaking, they would have to accept--as they accept in speechless wonder the miracle of the universe, of man and of being--the miracle that God did not create Man, but 'male and female created He them.' They would have to accept in

> something more than the resignation of human weakness the fact that 'it is not good for man to be alone.'[43]

By being attentive to the actual voices of human plurality, we may come to realize that such voices do not merely demand our recognition in the form of a silent and solitary "step back," but also, in the form of public speech and action. This leads to the second point regarding Arendt's urge to engage in non-philosophical action and discourse with the plurality of unique beings with whom we are always already situated. If, as Arendt claims above, human plurality must be the subject matter of any philosophical thinking which is concerned with "the whole realm of human affairs," then anyone who engages in such thinking also *needs* a non-philosophical "contact with others in a public world,"[44] that is, an active and communicative engagement with the unique being of others. This is Arendt's basic thesis concerning the recognition of the human other in her uniqueness. Now, in order for this view to be intelligible, it is necessary to briefly consider her thoughts on action and speech, and the role of action and speech in disclosing the plurality of unique human beings.

As was noted above, the essential feature of human plurality, the fundamental condition of any human action or speech whatsoever, is that "we are all the same, that is, human, in such a way that nobody is ever the same as anyone else who ever lived, lives, or will live."[45] What Arendt means is that each one of us is a distinct, unique being, who always already exists in a world in which there are *other* distinct and unique human beings.

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[43]Hannah Arendt, "Philosophy and Politics," p. 103.

[44]Margaret Canovan, *Hannah Arendt: A Reinterpretation of Her Political Thought*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1992), p. 257.

[45]Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, p. 10.

In Arendt's view, such uniqueness is not merely given, but rather, is something which humans, through action and speech, bring about themselves. As Arendt says,

> Speech and action reveal this unique distinctness. Through them, men distinguish themselves instead of being merely distinct; they are modes in which human beings appear to each other, not indeed as physical objects, but *qua* men. This appearance, as distinguished from mere bodily existence, rests on initiative, but it is an initiative from which no human can refrain and still be human.[46]

Thus, for Arendt, the unique being of the human other is revealed through this other's own speech and action, the performance of which is always already "surrounded by and in constant contact with the web of the acts and words of other men."[47] "In acting and speaking," says Arendt, "men show who they are, reveal actively their unique personal identities and thus make their appearance in the human world..."[48] The unique being of the other person, on this account, is not merely theoretically "recognized" in terms of the *universal context* within which the person as a unique being, may contingently appear; rather, the unique being of the person is originally shown to us in the *actual* way in which that *particular* person appears as such in speech and action. Everything we do and say in the world with others is a revelation of who we are, but this is a revelation which requires that there *be* actual others to whom we are revealed, and who then in thought tell a meaningful story about, and so preserve and "recognize," our unique being as it originally appears in a plural world. It is thus through a non-philosophical engagement with the other in speech and action that the unique being of this other appears to us, a being which

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[46]Ibid., p. 156.
[47]Ibid., p. 167.
[48]Ibid., p. 159.

may then only be "preserved" and meaningfully *recognized in thought*.

What is thus crucial for Hannah Arendt's entire account is the point that the genuine recognition of the unique human other and human plurality requires that one *both* engage in non-philosophical action and speech with others, an engagement where others originally reveal to us their unique being, *and* a solitary, philosophical "step back" in order to explicate the *meaning* of, or tell a story concerning, one's own non-philosophical action and speech with the unique being of those others. Again, it is crucial to remember that for Arendt, philosophical thought does not, like Hegel and Heidegger, seek the *truth* of human plurality, but rather, the *meaning* of that plurality for us *as we live it*. It is in this sense that philosophical thought and non-philosophical speech and action are related, or better, *interrelated*. Given Hannah Arendt's reflections on the relation between thought, action, and human plurality or difference, it may indeed be the case that, if our concern is with meaningfully recognizing the unique voice of the other person, all of our philosophical attempts to do so must, like Penelope's web, undo "every morning what it has finished the night before,"[49] and in such self-destructiveness, constantly return to "spin new webs," or tell new stories about the changing condition of human plurality within which our non-philosophical action and speech with unique others always already occurs.

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[49]Hannah Arendt, *The Life of the Mind*, vol. I, *Thinking*, p. 88.

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